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ESMOND.


A STORY OF QUEEN ANNE'S REIGN.

BY

W. M. THACKERAY,

Author of "Vanity Fair," "Pendennis," &c.

VOLUME II.

 The Author of this work gives notice that he reserves to himself the right of translating it.



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THE HISTORY

OF

HENRY ESMOND, Esq.

A COLONEL IN THE SERVICE OF HER MAJESTY
Q. ANNE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto procefferit, et fibi confet.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SMITH, ELDER, & COMPANY,
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1853.

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CONTENTS.



BOOK II.

	Page
Contains Mr. Esmond's military life and other matters appertaining to the Esmond family	1

CHAPTER I.

I am in prifon, and vifited, but not confoled there . .	3
---	---

CHAPTER II.

I come to the end of my captivity, but not of my trouble	23
--	----

CHAPTER III.

I take the Queen's pay in Quin's Regiment	42
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

Recapitulations	62
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER V.

I go on the Vigo Bay Expedition, tafte falt water and fmell powder	75
---	----

CHAPTER VI.

The 29th December	98
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII.

	Page
I am made welcome at Walcote	113

CHAPTER VIII.

Family talk	134
-----------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX.

I make the campaign of 1704	148
---------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER X.

An old story about a fool and a woman	168
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

The famous Mr. Joseph Addison	188
---	-----

CHAPTER XII.

I get a company in the campaign of 1706	211
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

I meet an old acquaintance in Flanders, and find my mother's grave and my own cradle there	222
---	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

The campaign of 1707, 1708	248
--------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

General Webb wins the battle of Wynendael	265
---	-----

BOOK II.

CONTAINS MR. ESMOND'S MILITARY LIFE AND
OTHER MATTERS APPERTAINING TO THE
ESMOND FAMILY.

THE HISTORY
OF
HENRY ESMOND.



CHAPTER I.

I AM IN PRISON, AND VISITED, BUT NOT CONSOLED THERE.

THOSE may imagine, who have seen Death untimely strike down persons revered and beloved, and know how unavailing consolation is, what was Harry Esmond's anguish after being an actor in that ghastly midnight scene of blood and homicide. He could not, he felt, have faced his dear mistress, and told her that story. He was thankful that kind Atterbury consented to break the sad news to her ; but, besides his grief, which he took into prison with him, he had that in his heart which secretly cheered and consoled him.

A great secret had been told to Esmond by his unhappy stricken kinsman, lying on his death-bed. Were he to disclose it, as in equity and honour he might do, the discovery would but bring greater grief upon those whom he loved best in the world, and who were sad enough already. Should he bring down shame and perplexity upon all those beings to whom he was attached by so many tender ties of affection and gratitude? degrade his father's widow? impeach and sully his father's and kinsman's honour? and for what? for a barren title, to be worn at the expense of an innocent boy, the son of his dearest benefactress. He had debated this matter in his conscience, whilst his poor lord was making his dying confession. On one side were Ambition, Temptation, Justice, even; but Love, Gratitude, and Fidelity, pleaded on the other. And when the struggle was over in Harry's mind, a glow of righteous happiness filled it; and it was with grateful tears in his eyes that he returned thanks to God for that decision which he had been enabled to make.

“When I was denied by my own blood,” thought he, “these dearest friends received and

cherished me. When I was a nameless orphan myself, and needed a protector, I found one in yonder kind soul, who has gone to his account repenting of the innocent wrong he has done."

And with this consoling thought he went away to give himself up at the prison, after kissing the cold lips of his benefactor.

It was on the third day after he had come to the Gatehouse prison, (where he lay in no small pain from his wound, which inflamed and ached severely;) and with those thoughts and resolutions that have been just spoke of, to depress, and yet to console him; that H. Esmond's keeper came and told him that a visitor was asking for him, and though he could not see her face, which was enveloped in a black hood, her whole figure, too, being veiled and covered with the deepest mourning, Esmond knew at once that his visitor was his dear mistress.

He got up from his bed, where he was lying, being very weak; and advancing towards her, as the retiring keeper shut the door upon him and his guest in that sad place, he put forward his left hand (for the right was wounded and bandaged), and he would have taken that kind one of his

mistress, which had done so many offices of friendship for him for so many years.

But the Lady Castlewood went back from him, putting back her hood, and leaning against the great stanchioned door which the gaoler had just closed upon them. Her face was ghastly white, as Esmond saw it, looking from the hood; and her eyes, ordinarily so sweet and tender, were fixed at him with such a tragick glance of woe and anger, as caused the young man, unaccustomed to unkindness from that person, to avert his own glances from her face.

“And this, Mr. Esmond,” she said, “is where I see you; and ’tis to this you have brought me!”

“You have come to console me in my calamity, madam,” said he (though, in truth, he scarce knew how to address her, his emotions, at beholding her, so overpowered him).

She advanced a little, but stood silent and trembling, looking out at him from her black draperies, with her small white hands clasped together, and quivering lips and hollow eyes.

“Not to reproach me,” he continued, after a pause. “My grief is sufficient as it is.”

“Take back your hand—do not touch me with it!” she cried. “Look! there’s blood on it!”

“I wish they had taken it all,” said Esmond, “if you are unkind to me.”

“Where is my husband?” she broke out. “Give me back my husband, Henry. Why did you stand by at midnight and see him murdered? Why did the traitor escape who did it? You, the champion of your house, who offered to die for us? You that he loved and trusted, and to whom I confided him—you that vowed devotion and gratitude, and I believed you—yes, I believed you—why are you here, and my noble Francis gone? Why did you come among us? You have only brought us grief and sorrow; and repentance, bitter, bitter repentance, as a return for our love and kindness. Did I ever do you a wrong, Henry? You were but an orphan child when I first saw you—when *he* first saw you, who was so good, and noble, and trusting. He would have had you sent away, but like a foolish woman, I besought him to let you stay. And you pretended to love us, and we believed you—and you made our house wretched, and my husband’s

heart went from me: and I lost him through you—I lost him—the husband of my youth, I say. I worshipped him: you know I worshipped him—and he was changed to me. He was no more my Francis of old—my dear, dear soldier. He loved me before he saw you; and I loved him; O, God is my witness how I loved him! Why did he not send you from among us? 'Twas only his kindness that could refuse me nothing then. And, young as you were,—yes, and weak and alone—there was evil, I knew there was evil, in keeping you. I read it in your face and eyes. I saw that they boded harm to us—and it came, I knew it would. Why did you not die when you had the small-pox—and I came myself and watched you, and you didn't know me in your delirium—and you called out for me, though I was there at your side. All that has happened since, was a just judgment on my wicked heart—my wicked jealous heart. O, I am punished, awfully punished! My husband lies in his blood—murdered for defending me, my kind, kind, generous lord—and you were by, and you let him die, Henry!”

These words, uttered in the wildness of her

grief, by one who was ordinarily quiet, and spoke seldom except with a gentle smile and a soothing tone, rung in Esmond's ear ; and 'tis said that he repeated many of them in the fever into which he now fell from his wound, and perhaps from the emotion which such passionate undeserved upbraidings caused him. It seemed as if his very sacrifices and love for this lady and her family were to turn to evil and reproach : as if his presence amongst them was indeed a cause of grief, and the continuance of his life but woe and bitterness to theirs. As the Lady Castlewood spoke bitterly, rapidly, without a tear, he never offered a word of appeal or remonstrance ; but sat at the foot of his prison-bed, stricken only with the more pain at thinking it was that soft and beloved hand which should stab him so cruelly, and powerless against her fatal sorrow. Her words as she spoke struck the chords of all his memory, and the whole of his boyhood and youth passed within him, whilst this lady, so fond and gentle but yesterday,—this good angel whom he had loved and worshipped,—stood before him, pursuing him with keen words and aspect malign.

“ I wish I were in my lord's place,” he groaned

out. “It was not my fault that I was not there, Madam. But Fate is stronger than all of us, and willed what has come to pass. It had been better for me to have died when I had the illness.”

“Yes, Henry,” said she—and as she spoke she looked at him with a glance that was at once so fond and so sad, that the young man tossing up his arms wildly fell back, hiding his head in the coverlet of the bed. As he turned he struck against the wall with his wounded hand, displacing the ligature; and he felt the blood rushing again from the wound. He remembered feeling a secret pleasure at the accident—and thinking “Suppose I were to end now, who would grieve for me?”

This hemorrhage, or the grief and despair in which the luckless young man was at the time of the accident, must have brought on a deliquium presently; for he had scarce any recollection afterwards, save of some one, his mistress probably, seizing his hand—and then of the buzzing noise in his ears as he awoke, with two or three persons of the prison around his bed, whereon he lay in a pool of blood from his arm.

It was now bandaged up again by the prison surgeon, who happened to be in the place : and the governor's wife and servant, kind people both, were with the patient. Esmond saw his mistress still in the room when he awoke from his trance : but she went away without a word ; though the governor's wife told him that she sat in her room for some time afterward, and did not leave the prison until she heard that Esmond was likely to do well.

Days afterwards, when Esmond was brought out of a fever which he had, and which attacked him that night pretty sharply, the honest keeper's wife brought her patient a handkerchief fresh washed and ironed, and at the corner of which he recognised his mistress's well-known cipher and viscountess's crown. " The lady had bound it round his arm when he fainted, and before she called for help," the keeper's wife said. " Poor lady ; she took on sadly about her husband. He has been buried to-day, and a many of the coaches of the nobility went with him,—my Lord Marlborough's and my Lord Sunderland's, and many of the officers of the Guards, in which he served in the old King's time : and my lady

has been with her two children to the King at Kenfington, and asked for justice against my Lord Mohun, who is in hiding, and my lord the Earl of Warwick and Holland, who is ready to give himself up and take his trial.”

Such were the news, coupled with assertions about her own honesty and that of Molly her maid, who would never have stolen a certain trumpery gold sleeve-button of Mr. Esmond’s that was missing after his fainting fit, that the keeper’s wife brought to her lodger. His thoughts followed to that untimely grave, the brave heart, the kind friend, the gallant gentleman, honest of word and generous of thought (if feeble of purpose, but are his betters much stronger than he ?) who had given him bread and shelter when he had none ; home and love when he needed them ; and who, if he had kept one vital secret from him, had done that of which he repented ere dying,—a wrong indeed, but one followed by remorse, and occasioned by almost irresistible temptation.

Esmond took his handkerchief when his nurse left him, and very likely kissed it, and looked at the bauble embroidered in the corner. “ It has

cost thee grief enough," he thought, "dear lady, so loving and so tender. Shall I take it from thee and thy children? No, never! Keep it, and wear it, my little Frank, my pretty boy. If I cannot make a name for myself, I can die without one. Some day, when my dear mistress sees my heart, I shall be righted; or if not here or now, why, elsewhere: where Honour doth not follow us, but where love reigns perpetual."

'Tis needless to narrate here, as the reports of the lawyers already have chronicled them, the particulars or issue of that trial which ensued upon my Lord Castlewood's melancholy homicide. Of the two lords engaged in that sad matter, the second, my lord the Earl of Warwick and Holland, who had been engaged with Colonel Westbury, and wounded by him, was found not guilty by his peers, before whom he was tried (under the presidency of the Lord Steward, Lord Somers); and the principal, the Lord Mohun, being found guilty of the manslaughter, (which, indeed, was forced upon him, and of which he repented most sincerely,) pleaded his clergy; and so was discharged without any penalty. The widow of the slain nobleman, as it was told us

in prison, showed an extraordinary spirit; and though she had to wait for ten years before her son was old enough to compass it, declared she would have revenge of her husband's murderer. So much and suddenly had grief, anger and misfortune appeared to change her. But fortune, good or ill, as I take it, does not change men and women. It but develops their characters. As there are a thousand thoughts lying within a man that he does not know till he takes up the pen to write, so the heart is a secret even to him (or her) who has it in his own breast. Who hath not found himself surprised into revenge, or action, or passion, for good or evil; whereof the seeds lay within him, latent and unsuspected until the occasion called them forth? With the death of her lord, a change seemed to come over the whole conduct and mind of Lady Castlewood; but of this we shall speak in the right season and anon.

The lords being tried then before their peers at Westminster, according to their privilege, being brought from the Tower with state processions and barges, and accompanied by lieutenants and axemen, the commoners engaged in that melan-

choly fray took their trial at Newgate, as became them ; and, being all found guilty, pleaded likewise their benefit of clergy. The sentence, as we all know, in these cases is, that the culprit lies a year in prison, or during the King's pleasure, and is burned in the hand, or only stamped with a cold iron ; or this part of the punishment is altogether remitted at the grace of the Sovereign. So Harry Esmond found himself a criminal and a prisoner at two-and-twenty years old ; as for the two colonels, his comrades, they took the matter very lightly. Duelling was a part of their business ; and they could not in honour refuse any invitations of that sort.

But the case was different with Mr. Esmond. His life was changed by that stroke of the sword which destroyed his kind patron's. As he lay in prison old Dr. Tusher fell ill and died ; and Lady Castlemore appointed Thomas Tusher to the vacant living ; about the filling of which she had a thousand times fondly talked to Harry Esmond : how they never should part ; how he should educate her boy ; how to be a country clergyman, like faintly George Herbert or pious Dr. Ken, was the happiness and greatest lot in

life; how (if he were obstinately bent on it, though, for her part, she owned rather to holding Queen Bess's opinion, that a bishop should have no wife, and if not a bishop, why a clergyman?) she would find a good wife for Harry Esmond: and so on, with a hundred pretty prospects told by fireside evenings, in fond prattle, as the children played about the hall. All these plans were overthrown now. Thomas Tusher wrote to Esmond, as he lay in prison, announcing that his patroness had conferred upon him the living his reverend father had held for many years; that she never, after the tragical events which had occurred (whereof Tom spoke with a very edifying horror), could see in the revered Tusher's pulpit, or at her son's table, the man who was answerable for the father's life; that her ladyship bade him to say that she prayed for her kinsman's repentance and his worldly happiness; that he was free to command her aid for any scheme of life which he might propose to himself; but that on this side of the grave she would see him no more. And Tusher, for his own part, added that Harry should have his prayers as a friend of his youth, and commended him whilst

he was in prison to read certain works of theology, which his Reverence pronounced to be very wholesome for sinners in his lamentable condition.

And this was the return for a life of devotion—this the end of years of affectionate intercourse and passionate fidelity! Harry would have died for his patron, and was held as little better than his murderer: he had sacrificed, she did not know how much, for his mistress, and she threw him aside—he had endowed her family with all they had, and she talked about giving him alms as to a menial! The grief for his patron's loss: the pains of his own present position, and doubts as to the future: all these were forgotten under the sense of the consummate outrage which he had to endure, and overpowered by the superior pang of that torture.

He writ back a letter to Mr. Tusker from his prison, congratulating his Reverence upon his appointment to the living of Castlewood: sarcastically bidding him to follow in the footsteps of his admirable father, whose gown had descended upon him—thanking her ladyship for her offer of alms, which he said he should trust

not to need; and beseeching her to remember that if ever her determination should change towards him, he would be ready to give her proofs of a fidelity which had never wavered and which ought never to have been questioned by that house. “And if we meet no more, or only as strangers in this world,” Mr. Esmond concluded, “a sentence against the cruelty and injustice of which I disdain to appeal; hereafter she will know who was faithful to her, and whether she had any cause to suspect the love and devotion of her kinsman and servant.”

After the sending of this letter, the poor young fellow's mind was more at ease than it had been previously. The blow had been struck, and he had borne it. His cruel Goddess had shaken her wings and fled: and left him alone and friendless, but *virtute sua*. And he had to bear him up, at once the sense of his right, and the feeling of his wrongs, his honour and his misfortune. As I have seen men waking and running to arms, at a sudden trumpet; before emergency a manly heart leaps up resolute; meets the threatening danger with undaunted countenance; and whether conquered or conquering, faces

it always. Ah! no man knows his strength or his weakness, till occasion proves them. If there be some thoughts and actions of his life from the memory of which a man shrinks with shame, sure there are some which he may be proud to own and remember; forgiven injuries, conquered temptations (now and then), and difficulties vanquished by endurance.

It was these thoughts regarding the living, far more than any great poignancy of grief respecting the dead, which affected Harry Esmond whilst in prison after his trial: but it may be imagined that he could take no comrade of misfortune into the confidence of his feelings, and they thought it was remorse and sorrow for his patron's loss which affected the young man, in error of which opinion he chose to leave them. As a companion he was so moody and silent that the two officers, his fellow sufferers, left him to himself mostly, liked little very likely what they knew of him, consoled themselves with dice, cards, and the bottle, and whiled away their own captivity in their own way. It seemed to Esmond as if he lived years

in that prison : and was changed and aged when he came out of it. At certain periods of life we live years of emotion in a few weeks—and look back on those times, as on great gaps between the old life and the new. You do not know how much you suffer in those critical maladies of the heart, until the disease is over and you look back on it afterwards. During the time, the suffering is at least sufferable. The day passes in more or less of pain, and the night wears away somehow. 'Tis only in after days that we see what the danger has been—as a man out a hunting or riding for his life looks at a leap, and wonders how he should have survived the taking of it. O, dark months of grief and rage! of wrong and cruel endurance! He is old now who recalls you. Long ago he has forgiven and blest the soft hand that wounded him : but the mark is there, and the wound is cicatrized only—no time, tears, caresses, or repentance, can obliterate the scar. We are indocile to put up with grief, however. *Reficimus rates quassas*: we tempt the ocean again and again, and try upon new ventures. Esmond thought of his early time as a noviciate, and of

this past trial as an initiation before entering into life,—as our young Indians undergo tortures silently before they pass to the rank of warriors in the tribe.

The officers, meanwhile, who were not let into the secret of the grief which was gnawing at the side of their silent young friend, and being accustomed to such transactions in which one comrade or another was daily paying the forfeit of the sword, did not of course bemoan themselves very inconsolably about the fate of their late companion in arms. This one told stories of former adventures of love, or war, or pleasure in which poor Frank Esmond had been engaged; t'other recollected how a constable had been bilked, or a tavern-bully beaten: whilst my lord's poor widow was sitting at his tomb worshipping him as an actual saint and spotless hero,—so the visitors said who had news of Lady Castlewood; and Westbury and Macartney had pretty nearly had all the town to come and see them.

The duel, its fatal termination, the trial of the two peers and the three commoners concerned, had caused the greatest excitement in the town. The prints and News Letters were full of them.

The three gentlemen in Newgate were almost as much crowded as the bishops in the Tower, or a highwayman before execution. We were allowed to live in the Governor's house, as hath been said, both before trial and after condemnation, waiting the King's pleasure ; nor was the real cause of the fatal quarrel known, so closely had my lord and the two other persons who knew it kept the secret, but every one imagined that the origin of the meeting was a gambling dispute. Except fresh air, the prisoners had, upon payment, most things they could desire. Interest was made that they should not mix with the vulgar convicts, whose ribald choruses and loud laughter and curses could be heard from their own part of the prison, where they and the miserable debtors were confined pell-mell.

CHAPTER II.



I COME TO THE END OF MY CAPTIVITY, BUT NOT OF
MY TROUBLE.

AMONG the company which came to visit the two officers was an old acquaintance of Harry Esmond; that gentleman of the Guards, namely, who had been so kind to Harry when Captain Westbury's troop had been quartered at Castlewood more than seven years before. Dick the Scholar was no longer Dick the Trooper now, but Captain Steele, of Lucas's Fusileers, and secretary to my Lord Cutts, that famous officer of King William's, the bravest and most beloved man of the English army. The two jolly prisoners had been drinking with a party of friends (for our cellar and that of the keepers of Newgate, too, were supplied with endless hampers of Burgundy and Champagne that the friends of the Colonels sent in); and Harry, having no wish

for their drink, or their conversation, being too feeble in health for the one, and too sad in spirits for the other, was sitting apart in his little room, reading such books as he had, one evening, when honest Colonel Westbury, flushed with liquor, and always good-humoured in and out of his cups, came laughing into Harry's closet, and said "Ho, young Killjoy! here's a friend come to see thee; he'll pray with thee, or he'll drink with thee; or he'll drink and pray turn about. Dick, my Christian Hero, here's the little scholar of Castlewood."

Dick came up and kissed Esmond on both cheeks, imparting a strong perfume of burnt sack along with his caresses to the young man.

"What! is this the little man that used to talk Latin and fetch our bowls? How tall thou art grown! I protest I should have known thee anywhere. And so you have turned ruffian and fighter; and wanted to measure swords with Mohun, did you? I protest that Mohun said at the Guard dinner yesterday, where there was a pretty company of us, that the young fellow wanted to fight him, and was the better man of the two."

“I wish we could have tried and proved it, Mr. Steele,” says Esmond, thinking of his dead benefactor, and his eyes filling with tears.

With the exception of that one cruel letter which he had from his mistress, Mr. Esmond heard nothing from her, and she seemed determined to execute her resolve of parting from him and disowning him. But he had news of her, such as it was, which Mr. Steele assiduously brought him from the Prince’s and Princesses’ Court, where our honest Captain had been advanced to the post of gentleman waiter. When off duty there, Captain Dick often came to console his friends in captivity ; a good nature and a friendly disposition towards all who were in ill-fortune no doubt prompting him to make his visits, and good fellowship and good wine to prolong them.

“Faith,” says Westbury, “the little scholar was the first to begin the quarrel—I mind me of it now—at Lockit’s. I always hated that fellow Mohun. What was the real cause of the quarrel betwixt him and poor Frank? I would wager ’twas a woman.”

“’Twas a quarrel about play—on my word,

about play," Harry said. "My poor lord lost great sums to his guest at Castlewood. Angry words passed between them; and though Lord Castlewood was the kindest and most pliable soul alive, his spirit was very high; and hence that meeting which has brought us all here," says Mr. Esmond, resolved never to acknowledge that there had ever been any other but cards for the duel.

"I do not like to use bad words of a nobleman," says Westbury. "But if my Lord Mohun were a commoner, I would say, 'twas a pity he was not hanged. He was familiar with dice and women, at a time other boys are at school, being birched; he was as wicked as the oldest rake, years ere he had done growing; and handled a sword, and a foil, and a bloody one, too, before ever he used a razor. He held poor Will Mountford in talk that night, when bloody Dick Hill ran him through. He will come to a bad end, will that young lord; and no end is bad enough for him," says honest Mr. Westbury: whose prophecy was fulfilled twelve years after, upon that fatal day when Mohun fell, dragging down one of the

bravest and greatest gentlemen in England in his fall.

From Mr. Steele, then, who brought the publick rumour, as well as his own private intelligence, Esmond learned the movements of his unfortunate mistress. Steele's heart was of very inflammable composition; and the gentleman usher spoke in terms of boundless admiration both of the widow (that most beautiful woman, as he said), and of her daughter, who, in the Captain's eyes, was a still greater paragon. If the pale widow, whom Captain Richard, in his poetick rapture, compared to a Niobe in tears,—to a Sigismunda,—to a weeping Belvidera, was an object the most lovely and pathetick which his eyes had ever beheld, or for which his heart had melted, even her ripened perfections and beauty were as nothing, compared to the promise of that extreme loveliness which the good Captain saw in her daughter. It was *matre pulcra filia pulcrrior*. Steele composed sonnets whilst he was on duty in his Prince's antechamber, to the maternal and filial charms. He would speak for hours about them to Harry Esmond; and, indeed, he could have chosen few subjects more likely to interest

the unhappy young man, whose heart was now as always devoted to these ladies; and who was thankful to all who loved them, or praised them, or wished them well.

Not that his fidelity was recompensed by any answering kindness, or show of relenting even, on the part of a mistress obdurate now after ten years of love and benefactions. The poor young man getting no answer, save Tusser's, to that letter which he had written, and being too proud to write more, opened a part of his heart to Steele, than whom no man, when unhappy, could find a kinder hearer or more friendly emissary; described (in words which were no doubt pathetick, for they came *imo pectore*, and caused honest Dick to weep plentifully) his youth, his constancy, his fond devotion to that household which had reared him; his affection, how earned, and how tenderly requited until but yesterday, and (as far as he might) the circumstances and causes for which that sad quarrel had made of Esmond a prisoner under sentence, a widow and orphans of those whom in life he held dearest. In terms that might well move a harder-hearted man than young Esmond's confidant; for, indeed, the

speaker's own heart was half broke as he uttered them ; he described a part of what had taken place in that only sad interview which his mistress had granted him ; how she had left him with anger and almost imprecation, whose words and thoughts until then had been only blessing and kindness ; how she had accused him of the guilt of that blood, in exchange for which he would cheerfully have sacrificed his own (indeed, in this the Lord Mohun, the Lord Warwick, and all the gentlemen engaged, as well as the common rumour out of doors—Steele told him—bore out the luckless young man); and with all his heart, and tears, he besought Mr. Steele to inform his mistress of her kinsman's unhappiness, and to deprecate that cruel anger she showed him. Half frantick with grief at the injustice done him, and contrasting it with a thousand soft recollections of love and confidence gone by, that made his present misery inexpressibly more bitter, the poor wretch passed many a lonely day and wakeful night in a kind of powerless despair and rage against his iniquitous fortune. It was the softest hand that struck him, the gentlest and most compassionate nature that persecuted him. “I would as lief,”

he said, "have pleaded guilty to the murder, and have suffered for it like any other felon, as have to endure the torture to which my mistress subjects me."

Although the recital of Esmond's story, and his passionate appeals and remonstrances drew so many tears from Dick who heard them, they had no effect upon the person whom they were designed to move. Esmond's ambassador came back from the mission with which the poor young gentleman had charged him, with a sad blank face and a shake of the head which told that there was no hope for the prisoner; and scarce a wretched culprit in that prison of Newgate ordered for execution, and trembling for a reprieve, felt more cast down than Mr. Esmond, innocent and condemned.

As had been arranged between the prisoner and his council in their consultations, Mr. Steele had gone to the dowager's house in Chelsea, where it has been said the widow and her orphans were, had seen my Lady Viscountess and pleaded the cause of her unfortunate kinsman. "And I think I spoke well, my poor boy," says Mr. Steele; "for who would not speak well in

such a cause, and before so beautiful a judge. I did not see the lovely Beatrix (sure her famous namesake of Florence was never half so beautiful), only the young viscount was in the room with the Lord Churchill, my Lord of Marlborough's eldest son. But these young gentlemen went off to the garden, I could see them from the window tilting at each other with poles in a mimic tournament (grief touches the young but lightly, and I remember that I beat a drum at the coffin of my own father). My Lady Viscountess looked out at the two boys at their game, and said—'You see, sir, children are taught to use weapons of death as toys, and to make a sport of murder,' and as she spoke she looked so lovely, and stood there in herself so sad and beautiful an instance of that doctrine whereof I am a humble preacher, that had I not dedicated my little volume of the *Christian Hero*—(I perceive, Harry, thou hast not cut the leaves of it. The sermon is good, believe me, though the preacher's life may not answer it)—I say, hadn't I dedicated the volume to Lord Cutts, I would have asked permission to place her ladyship's name on the first page. I think I never saw such a beautiful violet as

that of her eyes, Harry. Her complexion is of the pink of the blushrose, she hath an exquisite turned wrist and dimpled hand, and I make no doubt—”

“Did you come to tell me about the dimples on my lady’s hand?” broke out Mr. Esmond, sadly.

“A lovely creature in affliction seems always doubly beautiful to me,” says the poor Captain, who indeed was but too often in a state to see double, and so checked he resumed the interrupted thread of his story. “As I spoke my business,” Mr. Steele said, “and narrated to your mistress what all the world knows, and the other side hath been eager to acknowledge—that you had tried to put yourself between the two lords, and to take your patron’s quarrel on your own point: I recounted the general praises of your gallantry, besides my Lord Mohun’s particular testimony to it: I thought the widow listened with some interest, and her eyes—I have never seen such a violet, Harry—looked up at mine once or twice. But after I had spoken on this theme for a while she suddenly broke away with a cry of grief. ‘I would to God, sir,’ she

said, ‘ I had never heard that word gallantry which you use, or known the meaning of it. My lord might have been here but for that; my home might be happy; my poor boy have a father. It was what you gentlemen call gallantry came into my home, and drove my husband on to the cruel sword that killed him. You should not speak the word to a Christian woman, sir—a poor widowed mother of orphans, whose home was happy until the world came into it—the wicked godless world, that takes the blood of the innocent and lets the guilty go free.’

“ As the afflicted lady spoke in this strain, sir,” Mr. Steele continued, “ it seemed as if indignation moved her, even more than grief. ‘ Compensation!’ she went on passionately, her cheeks and eyes kindling, ‘ what compensation does your world give the widow for her husband, and the children for the murderer of their father? The wretch who did the deed has not even a punishment. Conscience! what conscience has he, who can enter the house of a friend, whisper falsehood and insult to a woman that never harmed him, and stab the kind heart that trusted him? My lord—my Lord Wretch, my

Lord Villain's, my Lord Murderer's peers meet to try him, and they dismiss him with a word or two of reproof, and send him into the world again, to pursue women with lust and falsehood, and to murder unsuspecting guests that harbour him. That day, my lord—my Lord Murderer—(I will never name him)—was let loose, a woman was executed at Tyburn for stealing in a shop. But a man may rob another of his life, or a lady of her honour, and shall pay no penalty! I take my child, run to the throne, and, on my knees, ask for justice, and the King refuses me. The King! he is no king of mine—he never shall be. He, too, robbed the throne from the king his father—the true king—and he has gone unpunished, as the great do.'

"I then thought to speak for you," Mr. Steele continued, "and I interposed by saying, 'There was one, madam, who, at least, would have put his own breast between your husband's and my Lord Mohun's sword. Your poor young kinsman, Harry Esmond, hath told me that he tried to draw the quarrel on himself.'

"'Are you come from *him*?' asked the lady (so Mr. Steele went on) rising up with a great

severity and flatlinefs. ‘I thought you had come from the Princess. I saw Mr. Esmond in his prison, and bade him farewell. He brought misery into my house. He never should have entered it.’

“ ‘Madam, madam, he is not to blame,’ I interposed,” continued Mr. Steele.

“ ‘Do I blame him to you, sir?’ asked the widow. ‘If ’tis he who sent you, say that I have taken counsel, where’—she spoke with a very pallid cheek now, and a break in her voice—‘where all who ask may have it;—and that it bids me to part from him, and to see him no more. We met in the prison for the last time—at least for years to come. It may be, in years hence, when—when our knees and our tears and our contrition have changed our sinful hearts, sir, and wrought our pardon, we may meet again—but not now. After what has passed, I could not bear to see him. I wish him well, sir; but I wish him farewell, too; and if he has that—that regard towards us, which he speaks of, I beseech him to prove it by obeying me in this.’

“ ‘I shall break the young man’s heart,

madam, by this hard sentence,” Mr. Steele said.

“The lady shook her head,” continued my kind scholar. “‘The hearts of young men, Mr. Steele, are not so made,’ she said. ‘Mr. Esmond will find other—other friends. The mistress of this house has relented very much towards the late lord’s son,’ she added, with a blush, ‘and has promised me, that is, has promised that she will care for his fortune. Whilst I live in it, after the horrid horrid deed which has passed, Castlewood must never be a home to him—never. Nor would I have him write to me—except—no—I would have him never write to me, nor see him more. Give him, if you will, my parting—Hush! not a word of this before my daughter.’”

“Here the fair Beatrix entered from the river, with her cheeks flushing with health, and looking only the more lovely and fresh for the mourning habiliments which she wore. And my Lady Viscountess said:

“‘Beatrix, this is Mr. Steele, gentleman usher to the Prince’s Highness. When does your new comedy appear, Mr. Steele? I hope thou wilt be out of prison for the first night, Harry.’”

The sentimental captain concluded his sad tale, saying, "Faith, the beauty of *Filia pulcrrior* drove *pulcrum matrem* out of my head; and yet, as I came down the river, and thought about the pair, the pallid dignity and exquisite grace of the matron had the uppermost, and I thought her even more noble than the virgin!"

The party of prisoners lived very well in Newgate, and with comforts very different to those which were awarded to the poor wretches there (his insensibility to their misery, their gaiety still more frightful, their curses and blasphemy, hath struck with a kind of shame since—as proving how selfish during his imprisonment, his own particular grief was, and how entirely the thoughts of it absorbed him): if the three gentlemen lived well under the care of the Warden of Newgate, it was because they paid well: and indeed the cost at the dearest ordinary or the grandest tavern in London could not have furnished a longer reckoning, than our host of the Handcuff Inn—as Colonel Westbury called it. Our rooms were the three in the gate over Newgate—on the second story looking up

Newgate Street towards Cheapside and Paul's Church. And we had leave to walk on the roof, and could see thence Smithfield and the Bluecoat Boys' School, Gardens, and the Chartreux, where, as Harry Esmond remembered, Dick the Scholar, and his friend Tom Tusser, had had their schooling.

Harry could never have paid his share of that prodigious heavy reckoning which my landlord brought to his guests once a week: for he had but three pieces in his pockets that fatal night before the duel, when the gentlemen were at cards, and offered to play five. But whilst he was yet ill at the Gatehouse, after Lady Castlewood had visited him there, and before his trial, there came one in an orange-tawny coat and blue lace, the livery which the Esmonds always wore, and brought a sealed packet for Mr. Esmond, which contained twenty guineas, and a note saying that a counsel had been appointed for him, and that more money would be forthcoming whenever he needed it.

'Twas a queer letter from the scholar as she was, or as she called herself: the Dowager Viscountess Castlewood, written in the strange

barbarous French, which she and many other fine ladies of that time—witness Her Grace of Portsmouth—employed. Indeed, spelling was not an article of general commodity in the world then, and my Lord Marlborough’s letters can show that he, for one, had but a little share of this part of grammar.

“ Mong Couffin,” my Lady Viscountess Dowager wrote, “ je scay que vous vous etes bravement batew et grievement bléssay—du costé de feu M. le Vicomte. M. le Compte de Varique ne se playt qua parlay de vous : M. de Moon auçy. Il di que vous avay voulew vous bastre avecque luy—que vous estes plus fort que luy sur l’ayscrimme—quil’y a furtout certaine Botte que vous scavay quil n’ a jammay sceu pariaay : et que c’en eut été fay de luy si voufeluy vous vous fussiay battews ansamb. Aincy ce pauv Vicompte est mort. Mort et peutayt—Mon couffin, mon couffin ! jay dans la tayste que vous n’estes quung pety Monst — angcy que les Esmonds ong tousjours esté. La veuve est chay moy. J’ay recuilly cet’ pauve famme. Elle est furieuse cont vous, allans tous les jours chercher le Roy (d’icy) démandant à gran cri revanche pour son Mary.

Elle ne veux voyre ni entende parlay de vous :
 pourtant elle ne fay qu'en parlay milfoy par jour.
 Quand vous seray hor prifon venay me voyre.
 J'auray foing de vous. Si cette petite Prude
 veut se défaire de fong pety Monfte (Hélas je
 craing qu'il ne foy trotar !) je m'en chargeray.
 J'ay encor quelqu interay et quelques escus de
 coftay.

“ La Veuve se raccommode avec Miladi
 Marlboro qui est tout puiçante avecque la Reine
 Anne. Cet dam sentérayfent pour la petite
 prude ; qui pourctant a un fi du mesme asge
 que vous favay.

“ En fortant de prifong venez icy. Je ne puy
 vous recevoir chaymoy à cause des méchanfetés
 du monde, may pre du moy vous aurez logement.

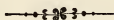
“ ISABELLE VICOMPTESSE D'ESMOND.”

Marchionefs of Esmond this lady sometimes
 called herself, in virtue of that patent which had
 been given by the late King James to Harry
 Esmond's father ; and in this state she had her
 train carried by a knight's wife, a cup and cover
 of assay to drink from, and fringed cloth.

He who was of the same age as little Francis,

whom we shall henceforth call Viscount Castlewood here, was H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, born in the same year and month with Frank, and just proclaimed at Saint Germain, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland.

CHAPTER III.



I TAKE THE QUEEN'S PAY IN QUIN'S REGIMENT.

THE fellow in the orange-tawny livery with blue lace and facings was in waiting when Esmond came out of prison, and taking the young gentleman's slender baggage, led the way out of that odious Newgate, and by Fleet Conduit, down to the Thames, where a pair of oars was called, and they went up the river to Chelsea. Esmond thought the sun had never shone so bright; nor the air felt so fresh and exhilarating. Temple Garden, as they rowed by, looked like the garden of Eden to him, and the aspect of the quays, wharves, and buildings by the river, Somerset House, and Westminster (where the splendid new bridge was just beginning), Lambeth tower and palace, and that busy shining scene of the

Thames swarming with boats and barges, filled his heart with pleasure and cheerfulness—as well such a beautiful scene might to one who had been a prisoner so long, and with so many dark thoughts deepening the gloom of his captivity. They rowed up at length to the pretty village of Chelsea, where the nobility have many handsome country-houses; and so came to my Lady Viscountess's house; a cheerful new house in the row facing the river, with a handsome garden behind it, and a pleasant look-out both towards Surrey and Kensington, where stands the noble ancient palace of the Lord Warwick, Harry's reconciled adversary.

Here in her ladyship's saloon, the young man saw again some of those pictures which had been at Castlewood, and which she had removed thence on the death of her lord, Harry's father. Specially, and in the place of honour, was Sir Peter Lely's picture of the Honourable Mistress Isabella Esmond as Diana, in yellow satin, with a bow in her hand and a crescent in her forehead; and dogs frisking about her. 'Twas painted about the time when royal Endymions were said to find favour with this virgin huntress; and as

goddeſſes have youth perpetual, this one believed to the day of her death that ſhe never grew older : and always perſiſted in ſuppoſing the picture was ſtill like her.

After he had been ſhown to her room by the groom of the chamber, who filled many offices beſides in her ladyſhip's modeſt houſehold ; and after a proper interval, this elderly goddeſs Diana vouchſafed to appear to the young man. A blackamoor in a Turkiſh habit, with red boots and a ſilver collar on which the Viſcounteſs's arms were engraven, preceded her and bore her cuſhion ; then came her gentlewoman ; a little pack of ſpaniels barking and friſking about preceded the auſtere huntreſs—then, behold, the Viſcounteſs herſelf “ dropping odours.” Eſmond recollected from his childhood that rich aroma of muſk which his mother-in-law (for ſhe may be called ſo) exhaled. As the ſky grows redder and redder towards ſunſet, ſo, in the decline of her years, the cheeks of my Lady Dowager bluſhed more deeply. Her face was illuminated with vermilion, which appeared the brighter from the white paint employed to ſet it off. She wore the ringlets which had been in faſhion in King

Charles's time; whereas the ladies of King William's had head-dresses like the towers of Cybele. Her eyes gleamed out from the midst of this queer structure of paint, dyes, and pomatums. Such was my Lady Viscountess, Mr. Esmond's father's widow.

He made her such a profound bow as her dignity and relationship merited: and advanced with the greatest gravity and once more kissed that hand upon the trembling knuckles of which glittered a score of rings—remembering old times when that trembling hand made him tremble. “Marchioness,” says he, bowing, and on one knee, “is it only the hand I may have the honour of saluting?” For, accompanying that inward laughter, which the sight of such an astonishing old figure might well produce in the young man, there was good-will too, and the kindness of consanguinity. She had been his father's wife, and was his grandfather's daughter. She had suffered him in old days, and was kind to him now after her fashion. And now that bar-finister was removed from Esmond's thoughts, and that secret opprobrium no longer cast upon his mind, he was pleased to feel family ties and

own them—perhaps secretly vain of the sacrifice he had made, and to think that he, Esmond, was really the chief of his house, and only prevented by his own magnanimity from advancing his claim.

At least, ever since he had learned that secret from his poor patron on his dying bed, actually as he was standing beside it, he had felt an independency which he had never known before, and which since did not desert him. So he called his old aunt Marchioness, but with an air as if he was the Marquis of Esmond who so addressed her.

Did she read in the young gentleman's eyes, which had now no fear of hers or their superannuated authority, that he knew or suspected the truth about his birth? She gave a start of surprise at his altered manner: indeed, it was quite a different bearing to that of the Cambridge student who had paid her a visit two years since, and whom she had dismissed with five pieces sent by the groom of the chamber. She eyed him, then trembled a little more than was her wont, perhaps, and said, "Welcome, cousin," in a frightened voice.

His resolution, as has been said before, had

been quite different, namely, so to bear himself through life as if the secret of his birth was not known to him ; but he suddenly and rightly determined on a different course. He asked that her ladyship's attendants should be dismissed, and when they were private—"Welcome, nephew, at least, madam, it should be," he said. "A great wrong has been done to me and to you, and to my poor mother, who is no more."

"I declare before Heaven that I was guiltless of it," she cried out, giving up her cause at once. "It was your wicked father who ——"

"Who brought this dishonour on our family," says Mr. Esmond. "I know it full well. I want to disturb no one. Those who are in present possession have been my dearest benefactors, and are quite innocent of intentional wrong to me. The late lord, my dear patron, knew not the truth until a few months before his death, when Father Holt brought the news to him."

"The wretch ! he had it in confession ! He had it in confession !" cried out the dowager lady.

"Not so. He learned it elsewhere as well as in confession," Mr. Esmond answered. "My

father, when wounded at the Boyne, told the truth to a French priest, who was in hiding after the battle, as well as to the priest there, at whose house he died. This gentleman did not think fit to divulge the story till he met with Mr. Holt at Saint Omer's. And the latter kept it back for his own purpose, and until he had learned whether my mother was alive or no. She is dead years since: my poor patron told me with his dying breath; and I doubt him not. I do not know even whether I could prove a marriage. I would not if I could. I do not care to bring shame on our name, or grief upon those whom I love, however hardly they may use me. My father's son, madam, won't aggravate the wrong my father did you. Continue to be his widow, and give me your kindness. 'Tis all I ask from you; and I shall never speak of this matter again."

"Mais vous etes un noble jeune homme!" breaks out my lady, speaking, as usual with her when she was agitated, in the French language.

"*Noblesse oblige*" says Mr. Esmond, making her a low bow. "There are those alive to whom, in return for their love to me, I often

fondly said I would give my life away. Shall I be their enemy now, and quarrel about a title? What matters who has it? 'Tis with the family still."

"What can there be in that little prude of a woman, that makes men so *raffoler* about her?" cries out my Lady Dowager. "She was here for a month petitioning the King. She is pretty, and well conserved; but she has not the *bel air*. In his late Majesty's court all the men pretended to admire her; and she was no better than a little wax doll. She is better now, and looks the sister of her daughter: but what mean you all by bepraising her? Mr. Steele, who was in waiting on Prince George, seeing her with her two children going to Kensington, writ a poem about her; and says he shall wear her colours, and dress in black for the future. Mr. Congreve says he will write a Mourning Widow, that shall be better than his Mourning Bride. Though their husbands quarrelled and fought when that wretch Churchill deserted the King (for which he deserved to be hung), Lady Marlborough has again gone wild about the little widow; insulted me in my own drawing-room, by saying that 'twas not the *old* widow, but the young

viscountess, she had come to see. Little Castlewood and little Lord Churchill are to be sworn friends, and have boxed each other twice or thrice like brothers already. 'Twas that wicked young Mohun who, coming back from the provinces last year, where he had disinterred her, raved about her all the winter; said she was a pearl set before swine; and killed poor stupid Frank. The quarrel was all about his wife. I know 'twas all about her. Was there anything between her and Mohun, nephew? Tell me now; was there anything? About yourself, I do not ask you to answer questions." Mr. Esmond blushed up. "My lady's virtue is like that of a saint in Heaven, madam," he cried out.

"Eh!—mon neveu. Many saints get to Heaven after having a deal to repent of. I believe you are like all the rest of the fools, and madly in love with her."

"Indeed, I loved and honoured her before all the world," Esmond answered. "I take no shame in that."

"And she has shut her door on you—given the living to that horrid young cub, son of that horrid old bear, Tusser, and says she will never

see you more. Monsieur mon neveu—we are all like that. When I was a young woman, I'm positive that a thousand duels were fought about me. And when poor Monsieur de Souchy drowned himself in the canal at Bruges, because I danced with Count Springbock, I couldn't squeeze out a single tear, but danced till five o'clock the next morning. 'Twas the Count—no, 'twas my Lord Ormond that payed the fiddles, and His Majesty did me the honour of dancing all night with me.—How you are grown! You have got the *bel air*. You are a black man. Our Esmonds are all black. The little prude's son is fair; so was his father—fair and stupid. You were an ugly little wretch, when you came to Castlewood—you were all eyes, like a young crow. We intended you should be a priest. That awful Father Holt—how he used to frighten me when I was ill! I have a comfortable director now—the Abbé Douillette—a dear man. We make meagre on Fridays always. My cook is a devout, pious man. You, of course, are of the right way of thinking. They say the Prince of Orange is very ill indeed.”

In this way the old dowager rattled on remorselessly to Mr. Esmond, who was quite astounded with her present volubility, contrasting it with her former haughty behaviour to him. But she had taken him into favour for the moment, and chose not only to like him, as far as her nature permitted, but to be afraid of him; and he found himself to be as familiar with her now as a young man, as, when a boy, he had been timorous and silent. She was as good as her word respecting him. She introduced him to her company, of which she entertained a good deal—of the adherents of King James, of course—and a great deal of loud intriguing took place over her card-tables. She presented Mr. Esmond as her kinsman to many persons of honour; she supplied him not illiberally with money, which he had no scruple in accepting from her, considering the relationship which he bore to her, and the sacrifices which he himself was making in behalf of the family. But he had made up his mind to continue at no woman's apron-strings longer; and perhaps had cast about how he should distinguish himself, and make himself a name, which his singular fortune had denied

him. A discontent with his former bookish life and quietude,—a bitter feeling of revolt at that slavery in which he had chosen to confine himself for the sake of those whose hardness towards him made his heart bleed,—a restless wish to see men and the world,—led him to think of the military profession: at any rate, to desire to see a few campaigns, and accordingly he pressed his new patroness to get him a pair of colours; and one day had the honour of finding himself appointed an ensign in Colonel Quin's regiment of Fusileers on the Irish establishment.

Mr. Esmond's commission was scarce three weeks old when that accident befel King William which ended the life of the greatest, the wisest, the bravest, and most clement sovereign whom England ever knew. 'Twas the fashion of the hostile party to assail this great prince's reputation during his life; but the joy which they and all his enemies in Europe showed at his death, is a proof of the terror in which they held him. Young as Esmond was, he was wise enough (and generous enough, too, let it be said), to scorn that indecency of gratulation which broke out amongst the followers of King James in London, upon

the death of this illustrious prince, this invincible warrior, this wise and moderate statesman. Loyalty to the exiled king's family was traditional, as has been said, in that house to which Mr. Esmond belonged. His father's widow had all her hopes, sympathies, recollections, prejudices, engaged on King James's side; and was certainly as noisy a conspirator as ever asserted the King's rights or abused his opponent's, over a quadrille table or a dish of bohea. Her ladyship's house swarmed with ecclesiasticks, in disguise and out; with tale-bearers from St. Germain's; and quidnuncs that knew the last news from Versailles; nay, the exact force and number of the next expedition which the French king was to send from Dunkirk, and which was to swallow up the Prince of Orange, his army, and his court. She had received the Duke of Berwick when he landed here in '96. She kept the glass he drank from, vowing she never would use it till she drank King James the Third's health in it on His Majesty's return; she had tokens from the Queen, and relics of the saint who, if the story was true, had not always been a saint as far as she and many others were con-

cerned. She believed in the miracles wrought at his tomb, and had a hundred authentick stories of wondrous cures effected by the blessed king's rosaries, the medals which he wore, the locks of his hair, or what not. Esmond remembered a score of marvellous tales, which the credulous old woman told him. There was the Bishop of Autun, that was healed of a malady he had for forty years, and which left him after he said mass, for the repose of the king's soul. There was M. Marais, a surgeon in Auvergne, who had a palsy in both his legs, which was cured through the king's intercession. There was Philip Pitet, of the Benedictines, who had a suffocating cough, which well nigh killed him, but he besought relief of Heaven, through the merits and intercession of the blessed king, and he straightway felt a profuse sweat breaking out all over him, and was recovered perfectly. And there was the wife of Mons. Lepervier, dancing-master to the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, who was entirely eased of a rheumatism by the king's intercession, of which miracle there could be no doubt, for her surgeon and his apprentice had given their testimony, under oath, that they did not in any way contribute

to the cure. Of these tales, and a thousand like them, Mr. Esmond believed as much as he chose. His kinswoman's greater faith had swallow for them all.

The English High Church party did not adopt these legends. But truth and honour, as they thought, bound them to the exiled king's side; nor had the banished family any warmer supporter than that kind lady of Castlewood, in whose house Esmond was brought up. She influenced her husband, very much more perhaps than my lord knew, who admired his wife prodigiously though he might be inconstant to her, and who, adverse to the trouble of thinking himself, gladly enough adopted the opinions which she chose for him. To one of her simple and faithful heart, allegiance to any sovereign but the one was impossible. To serve King William for interest's sake would have been a monstrous hypocrisy and treason. Her pure conscience could no more have consented to it than to a theft, a forgery, or any other base action. Lord Castlewood might have been won over, no doubt, but his wife never could; and he submitted his conscience to hers in this

case as he did in most others, when he was not tempted too forely. And it was from his affection and gratitude most likely, and from that eager devotion for his mistress, which characterised all Esmond's youth, that the young man subscribed to this, and other articles of faith, which his fond benefactress set him. Had she been a Whig, he had been one; had she followed Mr. Fox, and turned Quaker, no doubt he would have abjured ruffles and a periwig, and have foresworn swords, lace coats, and clocked stockings. In the scholars' boyish disputes at the University, where parties ran very high, Esmond was noted as a Jacobite, and very likely from vanity as much as affection took the side of his family.

Almost the whole of the clergy of the country and more than a half of the nation were on this side. Ours is the most loyal people in the world surely; we admire our kings, and are faithful to them long after they have ceased to be true to us. 'Tis a wonder to any one who looks back at the history of the Stuart family to think how they kicked their crowns away from them; how they flung away chances after chances; what

treasures of loyalty they dissipated, and how fatally they were bent on consummating their own ruin. If ever men had fidelity, 'twas they ; if ever men squandered opportunity, 'twas they ; and of all the enemies they had, they themselves were the most fatal.*

When the Princess Anne succeeded, the wearied nation was glad enough to cry a truce from all these wars, controversies, and conspiracies, and to accept in the person of a Princess of the blood royal a compromise between the parties into which the country was divided. The Tories could serve under her with easy consciences ; though a Tory herself, she represented the triumph of the Whig opinion. The people of England, always liking that their Princes should be attached to their own families, were pleased to think the Princess was faithful to hers ; and up to the very last day and hour of her reign, and but for that fatality which he inherited from his fathers along with their claims to the English crown, King James the Third might have

* Ω ποιοι, οἷον δη νυ θεους βροτοι αιτιωνται
 εξ ἡμεων γαρ φασι κακ' εμμεναι, οἱ δε και αυτοι
 σφησιν ατασθαλιησιν ὑπερ μορον αλγε' εχουσιν

worn it. But he neither knew how to wait an opportunity, nor to use it when he had it; he was venturesome when he ought to have been cautious, and cautious when he ought to have dared everything. 'Tis with a sort of rage at his inaptitude that one thinks of his melancholy story. Do the Fates deal more specially with kings than with common men? One is apt to imagine so, in considering the history of that royal race, in whose behalf so much fidelity, so much valour, so much blood were desperately and bootlessly expended.

The King dead then, the Princess Anne (ugly Anne Hyde's daughter, our dowager at Chelsea called her) was proclaimed by trumpeting heralds all over the town from Westminster to Ludgate Hill, amidst immense jubilations of the people.

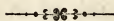
Next week my Lord Marlborough was promoted to the Garter and to be Captain-General of Her Majesty's forces at home and abroad. This appointment only inflamed the Dowager's rage, or, as she thought it, her fidelity to her rightful sovereign. "The Princess is but a puppet in the hands of that fury of a woman,

who comes into my drawing-room and insults me to my face. What can come to a country that is given over to such a woman?" says the Dowager: "As for that double-faced traitor, my Lord Marlborough, he has betrayed every man and every woman with whom he has had to deal, except his horrid wife who makes him tremble. 'Tis all over with the country when it has got into the clutches of such wretches as these."

Esmond's old kinswoman saluted the new powers in this way; but some good fortune at least occurred to a family which stood in great need of it, by the advancement of these famous personages who benefited humbler people that had the luck of being in their favour. Before Mr. Esmond left England in the month of August, and being then at Portsmouth, where he had joined his regiment, and was busy at drill, learning the practice and mysteries of the musket and pike, he heard that a pension on the Stamp Office had been got for his late beloved mistress, and that the young Mistress Beatrix was also to be taken into court. So much good, at least, had come of the poor widow's visit to London, not revenge upon her husband's enemies, but recon-

cilement to old friends, who pitied, and seemed inclined to serve her. As for the comrades in prison and the late misfortune : Colonel Westbury was with the Captain-General gone to Holland ; Captain Macartney was now at Portsmouth, with his regiment of Fusileers and the force under command of his Grace the Duke of Ormond, bound for Spain it was said ; my Lord Warwick was returned home ; and Lord Mohun, so far from being punished for the homicide which had brought so much grief and change into the Esmond family, was gone in company of my Lord Macclesfield's splendid embassy to the Elector of Hanover, carrying the Garter to his Highness, and a complimentary letter from the Queen.

CHAPTER IV.



RECAPITULATIONS.

FROM such fitful lights as could be cast upon his dark history by the broken narrative of his poor patron, torn by remorse and struggling in the last pangs of dissolution, Mr. Esmond had been made to understand so far, that his mother was long since dead; and so there could be no question as regarded her or her honour, tarnished by her husband's desertion and injury, to influence her son in any steps which he might take either for prosecuting or relinquishing his own just claims. It appeared from my poor lord's hurried confession, that he had been made acquainted with the real facts of the case only two years since, when Mr. Holt visited him, and would have implicated him in one of those many conspiracies by which the

secret leaders of King James's party in this country were ever endeavouring to destroy the Prince of Orange's life or power ; conspiracies so like murder, so cowardly in the means used, so wicked in the end, that our nation has sure done well in throwing off all allegiance and fidelity to the unhappy family that could not vindicate its right except by such treachery,—by such dark intrigue and base agents. There were designs against King William that were no more honourable than the ambushes of cut-throats and footpads. 'Tis humiliating to think that a great Prince, possessor of a great and sacred right, and upholder of a great cause, should have stooped to such baseness of assassination and treasons as are proved by the unfortunate King James's own warrant and sign manual given to his supporters in this country. What he and they called levying war was, in truth, no better than instigating murder. The noble Prince of Orange burst magnanimously through those feeble meshes of conspiracy in which his enemies tried to envelop him : it seemed as if their cowardly daggers broke upon the breast of his undaunted resolution. After King James's

death, the Queen and her people at St. Germain —priests and women for the most part—continued their intrigues in behalf of the young Prince, James the Third, as he was called in France and by his party here (this Prince, or Chevalier de St. George, was born in the same year with Esmond's young pupil Frank, my Lord Viscount's son): and the Prince's affairs, being in the hands of priests and women, were conducted as priests and women will conduct them, artfully, cruelly, feebly, and to a certain bad issue. The moral of the Jesuits' story I think as wholesome a one as ever was writ: the artfullest, the wisest, the most toilsome, and dexterous plot-builders in the world,—there always comes a day when the roused publick indignation kicks their flimsy edifice down, and sends its cowardly enemies a-flying. Mr. Swift hath finely described that passion for intrigue, that love of secrecy, slander and lying, which belongs to weak people, hangers-on of weak courts. 'Tis the nature of such to hate and envy the strong, and conspire their ruin; and the conspiracy succeeds very well, and everything presages the satisfactory overthrow of the great victim; until

one day Gulliver rouses himself, shakes off the little vermin of an enemy, and walks away unmolested. Ah ! the Irish soldiers might well say after the Boyne, “ Change kings with us, and we will fight it over again.” Indeed, the fight was not fair between the two. ’Twas a weak priest-ridden, woman-ridden man, with such puny allies and weapons as his own poor nature led him to choose, contending against the schemes, the generalship, the wisdom, and the heart of a hero.

On one of these many coward’s errands, then (for, as I view them now, I can call them no less), Mr. Holt had come to my Lord at Castlewood, proposing some infallible plan for the Prince of Orange’s destruction, in which my Lord Viscount, loyalist as he was, had indignantly refused to join. As far as Mr. Esmond could gather from his dying words, Holt came to my lord with a plan of insurrection, and offer of the renewal, in his person, of that marquis’s title, which King James had conferred on the preceding viscount ; and on refusal of this bribe, a threat was made, on Holt’s part, to upset my Lord Viscount’s claim to his estate and title of

Castlewood altogether. To back this astounding piece of intelligence, of which Henry Esmond's patron now had the first light, Holt came armed with the late lord's dying declaration, after the affair of the Boyne, at Trim, in Ireland, made both to the Irish priest and a French ecclesiastick of Holt's order, that was with King James's army. Holt showed, or pretended to show, the marriage certificate of the late Viscount Esmond with my mother, in the city of Brussels, in the year 1677, when the viscount, then Thomas Esmond, was serving with the English army in Flanders; he could show, he said, that this Gertrude, deserted by her husband long since, was alive, and a professed nun in the year 1685, at Brussels, in which year Thomas Esmond married his uncle's daughter, Isabella, now called Viscountess Dowager of Castlewood; and leaving him, for twelve hours, to consider this astounding news (so the poor dying lord said), disappeared with his papers in the mysterious way in which he came. Esmond knew how, well enough: by that window from which he had seen the father issue:—but there was no need to explain to my poor lord, only to gather from his

parting lips the words which he would soon be able to utter no more.

Ere the twelve hours were over, Holt himself was a prisoner, implicated in Sir John Fenwick's conspiracy, and locked up at Hexton first, whence he was transferred to the Tower; leaving the poor Lord Viscount, who was not aware of the other's being taken, in daily apprehension of his return, when (as my Lord Castlewood declared, calling God to witness, and with tears in his dying eyes), it had been his intention at once to give up his estate and his title to their proper owner, and to retire to his own house at Walcote with his family. "And would to God I had done it," the poor lord said; "I would not be here now, wounded to death, a miserable, stricken man!"

My lord waited day after day, and, as may be supposed, no messenger came; but at a month's end Holt got means to convey to him a message out of the Tower, which was to this effect: that he should consider all unpaid that had been said, and that things were as they were.

"I had a fore temptation," said my poor lord.

“Since I had come into this cursed title of Castlewood, which hath never prospered with me, I have spent far more than the income of that estate, and my paternal one, too. I calculated all my means down to the last shilling, and found I never could pay you back, my poor Harry, whose fortune I had had for twelve years. My wife and children must have gone out of the house dishonoured, and beggars. God knows, it hath been a miserable one for me and mine. Like a coward, I clung to that respite which Holt gave me. I kept the truth from Rachel and you. I tried to win money of Mohun, and only plunged deeper into debt; I scarce dared look thee in the face when I saw thee. This sword hath been hanging over my head these two years. I swear I felt happy, when Mohun’s blade entered my side.”

After lying ten months in the Tower, Holt, against whom nothing could be found, except that he was a Jesuit-priest, known to be in King James’s interest, was put on shipboard by the incorrigible forgiveness of King William, who promised him, however, a hanging, if ever he should again set foot on English shore. More

than once, whilst he was in prison himself, Esmond had thought where those papers could be, which the Jesuit had shown to his patron, and which had such an interest for himself. They were not found on Mr. Holt's person when that Father was apprehended, for had such been the case my lords of the council had seen them, and this family history had long since been made publick. However, Esmond cared not to seek the papers. His resolution being taken; his poor mother dead; what matter to him that documents existed proving his right to a title which he was determined not to claim, and of which he vowed never to deprive that family which he loved best in the world? Perhaps he took a greater pride out of his sacrifice than he would have had in those honours which he was resolved to forego. Again, as long as these titles were not forthcoming, Esmond's kinsman, dear young Francis, was the honourable and undisputed owner of the Castlewood estate and title. The mere word of a Jesuit could not overset Frank's right of occupancy, and so Esmond's mind felt actually at ease to think the papers were missing, and in their absence his dear

mistress and her son the lawful Lady and Lord of Castlewood.

Very soon after his liberation, Mr. Esmond made it his business to ride to that village of Ealing where he had passed his earliest years in this country, and to see if his old guardians were still alive and inhabitants of that place. But the only relique which he found of old M. Pastoureau was a stone in the churchyard, which told that Athanasius Pastoureau, a native of Flanders, lay there buried, aged 87 years. The old man's cottage, which Esmond perfectly recollected, and the garden (where in his childhood he had passed many hours of play and reverie, and had many a beating from his termagant of a foster-mother,) were now in the occupation of quite a different family ; and it was with difficulty that he could learn in the village what had come of Pastoureau's widow and children. The clerk of the parish recollected her—the old man was scarce altered in the fourteen years that had passed since last Esmond set eyes on him—it appeared she had pretty soon consoled herself after the death of her old husband, whom she ruled over, by taking a new one younger than herself, who spent her

money and ill-treated her and her children. The girl died; one of the boys 'listed; the other had gone apprentice. Old Mr. Rogers, the clerk, said he had heard that Mrs. Pastoureau was dead too. She and her husband had left Ealing this seven year; and so Mr. Esmond's hopes of gaining any information regarding his parentage from this family, were brought to an end. He gave the old clerk a crown-piece for his news, smiling to think of the time when he and his little playfellows had slunk out of the churchyard, or hidden behind the gravestones, at the approach of this awful authority.

Who was his mother? What had her name been? When did she die? Esmond longed to find some one who could answer these questions to him, and thought even of putting them to his aunt the viscountess, who had innocently taken the name which belonged of right to Henry's mother. But she knew nothing, or chose to know nothing, on this subject, nor, indeed, could Mr. Esmond press her much to speak on it. Father Holt was the only man who could enlighten him, and Esmond felt he must wait until some fresh chance or new intrigue might

put him face to face with his old friend, or bring that restless indefatigable spirit back to England again.

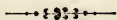
The appointment to his ensigncy, and the preparations necessary for the campaign, presently gave the young gentleman other matters to think of. His new patroness treated him very kindly and liberally ; she promised to make interest and pay money, too, to get him a company speedily ; she bade him procure a handsome outfit, both of clothes and of arms, and was pleased to admire him when he made his first appearance in his laced scarlet coat, and to permit him to salute her on the occasion of this interesting investiture. “Red,” says she, tossing up her old head, “hath always been the colour worn by the Esmonds.” And so her ladyship wore it on her own cheeks very faithfully to the last. She would have him be dressed, she said, as became his father’s son, and paid cheerfully for his five-pound beaver, his black buckled periwig, and his fine holland shirts, and his swords, and his pistols, mounted with silver. Since the day he was born, poor Harry had never looked such a fine gentleman : his

liberal stepmother filled his purse with guineas, too, some of which Captain Steele and a few choice spirits helped Harry to spend in an entertainment which Dick ordered (and, indeed, would have paid for, but that he had no money when the reckoning was called for ; nor would the landlord give him any more credit,) at the Garter, over against the gate of the Palace, in Pall Mall.

The old viscountess, indeed, if she had done Esmond any wrong formerly, seemed inclined to repair it by the present kindness of her behaviour : she embraced him copiously at parting, wept plentifully, bade him write by every packet, and gave him an inestimable relick, which she bestowed on him to wear round his neck—a medal, blessed by I know not what Pope, and worn by his late sacred Majesty King James. So Esmond arrived at his regiment with a better equipage than most young officers could afford. He was older than most of his seniors, and had a further advantage which belonged but to very few of the army gentlemen in his day—many of whom could do little more than write their names—that he had read much, both at home and at

the University, was master of two or three languages, and had that further education which neither books nor years will give, but which some men get from the silent teaching of adversity. She is a great schoolmistress, as many a poor fellow knows, that hath held his hand out to her ferule, and whimpered over his lesson before her awful chair.

CHAPTER V.



I GO ON THE VIGO BAY EXPEDITION, TASTE SALT WATER
AND SMELL POWDER.

THE first expedition in which Mr. Esmond had the honour to be engaged, rather resembled one of the invasions projected by the redoubted Captain Avory, or Captain Kid, than a war between crowned heads, carried on by generals of rank and honour. On the 1st day of July, 1702, a great fleet, of a hundred and fifty sail, set sail from Spithead, under the command of Admiral Shovell, having on board 12,000 troops, with his Grace the Duke of Ormond as the Capt.-General of the expedition. One of these 12,000 heroes having never been to sea before, or, at least, only once in his infancy, when he made the voyage to England from that unknown country where he was born,—one of those 12,000—the junior ensign of Col. Quin's

regiment of Fusileers—was in a quite unheroick state of corporal prostration a few hours after failing; and an enemy, had he boarded the ship, would have had easy work of him. From Portsmouth we put into Plymouth, and took in fresh reinforcements. We were off Finisterre on the 31st of July, so Esmond's table-book informs him; and on the 8th of August made the rock of Lisbon. By this time the ensign was grown as bold as an admiral, and a week afterwards had the fortune to be under fire for the first time,—and, under water, too,—his boat being swamped in the surf in Toros Bay, where the troops landed. The ducking of his new coat was all the harm the young soldier got in this expedition, for, indeed, the Spaniards made no stand before our troops, and were not in strength to do so.

But the campaign, if not very glorious, was very pleasant. New fights of nature, by sea and land,—a life of action, beginning, now, for the first time,—occupied and excited the young man. The many accidents, and the routine of ship-board,—the military duty,—the new acquaintances, both of his comrades in arms, and of the officers of the fleet, served to cheer and occupy

his mind, and waken it out of that selfish depression into which his late unhappy fortunes had plunged him. He felt as if the ocean separated him from his past care, and welcomed the new era of life which was dawning for him. Wounds heal rapidly in a heart of two-and-twenty; hopes revive daily; and courage rallies, in spite of a man. Perhaps, as Esmond thought of his late despondency and melancholy, and how irremediable it had seemed to him, as he lay in his prison a few months back, he was almost mortified in his secret mind at finding himself so cheerful.

To see with one's own eyes men and countries, is better than reading all the books of travel in the world; and it was with extreme delight and exultation that the young man found himself actually on his grand tour, and in the view of people and cities which he had read about as a boy. He beheld war, for the first time—the pride, pomp, and circumstance of it, at least, if not much of the danger. He saw actually, and with his own eyes, those Spanish cavaliers and ladies whom he had beheld in imagination in that immortal story of Cervantes, which had been the

delight of his youthful leisure. 'Tis forty years since Mr. Esmond witnessed those scenes, but they remain as fresh in his memory as on the day when first he saw them as a young man. A cloud, as of grief, that had lowered over him, and had wrapped the last years of his life in gloom, seemed to clear away from Esmond during this fortunate voyage and campaign. His energies seemed to awaken and to expand, under a cheerful sense of freedom. Was his heart secretly glad to have escaped from that fond but ignoble bondage at home? Was it that the inferiority to which the idea of his base birth had compelled him, vanished with the knowledge of that secret, which though, perforce, kept to himself, was yet enough to cheer and console him? At any rate, young Esmond of the army was quite a different being to the sad little dependant of the kind Castlewood household, and the melancholy student of Trinity Walks; discontented with his fate, and with the vocation into which that drove him, and thinking, with a secret indignation, that the cassock and bands, and the very sacred office with which he had once proposed to invest himself, were, in fact, but marks of a servitude

which was to continue all his life long. For, disguise it as he might to himself, he had all along felt that to be Castlewood's chaplain was to be Castlewood's inferior still, and that his life was but to be a long, hopeless servitude. So, indeed, he was far from grudging his old friend Tom Tusker's good fortune (as Tom, no doubt, thought it). Had it been a mitre and Lambeth which his friends offered him, and not a small living and a country parsonage, he would have felt as much a slave in one case as in the other, and was quite happy and thankful to be free.

The bravest man I ever knew in the army, and who had been present in most of King William's actions, as well as in the campaigns of the great Duke of Marlborough, could never be got to tell us of any achievement of his, except that once Prince Eugene ordered him up a tree to reconnoitre the enemy, which feat he could not achieve on account of the horseman's boots he wore; and on another day that he was very nearly taken prisoner because of these jack-boots, which prevented him from running away. The present narrator shall imitate this laudable reserve, and doth not intend to dwell upon his military

exploits, which were, in truth, not very different from those of a thousand other gentlemen. This first campaign of Mr. Esmond's lasted but a few days ; and as a score of books have been written concerning it, it may be dismissed very briefly here.

When our fleet came within view of Cadiz, our commander sent a boat with a white flag and a couple of officers to the Governor of Cadiz, Don Scipio de Brancaccio, with a letter from his Grace, in which he hoped that as Don Scipio had formerly served with the Austrians against the French in England, 'twas to be hoped that his Excellency would now declare himself against the French king and for the Austrian in the war between King Philip and King Charles. But his Excellency, Don Scipio, prepared a reply, in which he announced that, having served his former king with honour and fidelity, he hoped to exhibit the same loyalty and devotion towards his present sovereign, King Philip V. ; and by the time this letter was ready, the officers, who had been taken to see the town, and the alameda, and the theatre, where bull-fights are fought, and the convents, where the admirable

works of Don Bartholomew Murillo inspired one of them with a great wonder and delight—such as he had never felt before—concerning this divine art of painting; and these fights over, and a handsome refecton and chocolate being served to the English gentlemen, they were accompanied back to their shallop with every courtesy, and were the only two officers of the English army that saw at that time that famous city.

The General tried the power of another proclamation on the Spaniards, in which he announced that we only came in the interest of Spain and King Charles, and for ourselves wanted to make no conquest nor settlement in Spain at all. But all this eloquence was lost upon the Spaniards, it would seem: the Captain-General of Andalusia would no more listen to us than the Governor of Cadiz; and in reply to his Grace's proclamation, the Marquis of Villadarias fired off another, which those who knew the Spanish thought rather the best of the two; and of this number was Harry Esmond, whose kind Jesuit in old days had instructed him, and now had the honour of translating for his

Grace these harmless documents of war. There was a hard touch for his Grace, and, indeed, for other generals in Her Majesty's service, in the concluding sentence of the Don. "That he and his council had the generous example of their ancestors to follow, who had never yet sought their elevation in the blood or in the flight of their kings. '*Mori pro patria*' was his device, which the Duke might communicate to the Princesses who governed England."

Whether the troops were angry at this repartee or no, 'tis certain something put them in a fury, for not being able to get possession of Cadiz, our people seized upon Port Saint Mary's and sacked it, burning down the merchants' storehouses, getting drunk with the famous wines there; pillaging and robbing quiet houses and convents, murdering and doing worse. And the only blood which Mr. Esmond drew in this shameful campaign, was the knocking down an English sentinel with a half-pike, who was offering insult to a poor trembling nun. Is she going to turn out a beauty?—or a princess?—or perhaps Esmond's mother that he had lost and never seen? Alas no, it was but a poor wheezy

old dropfical woman, with a wart on her nofe. But having been early taught a part of the Roman religion, he never had the horror of it that fome Proteftants have fhown and feem to think to be a part of ours.

After the pillage and plunder of St. Mary's, and an affault upon a fort or two, the troops all took fhipping, and finifhed their expedition, at any rate, more brilliantly than it had begun. Hearing that the French fleet with a great treasure was in Vigo Bay, our Admirals, Rooke and Hopfon, purfued the enemy thither; the troops landed and carried the forts that protected the bay, Hopfon paffing the boom firft on board his fhip the *Torbay*, and the reft of the fhips, Englifh and Dutch, following him. Twenty fhips were burned or taken in the Port of Redondilla, and a vaft deal more plunder than was ever accounted for; but poor men before that expedition were rich afterwards, and fo often was it found and remarked that the Vigo officers came home with pockets full of money, that the notorious Jack Shafto who made fuch a figure at the coffee-houfes and gaming-tables in London, and gave out that he had been a foldier at Vigo,

owned, when he was about to be hanged, that Bagshot Heath had been *his* Vigo, and that he only spoke of La Redondilla to turn away people's eyes from the real place where the booty lay. Indeed, Hounslow or Vigo—which matters much? The latter was a bad business, though Mr. Addison did sing its praises in Latin. That honest gentleman's muse had an eye to the main chance; and I doubt whether she saw much inspiration in the losing side.

But though Esmond, for his part, got no share of this fabulous booty, one great prize which he had out of the campaign was, that excitement of action and change of scene, which shook off a great deal of his previous melancholy. He learnt at any rate to bear his fate cheerfully. He brought back a browned face, a heart resolute enough, and a little pleasant store of knowledge and observation, from that expedition, which was over with the autumn, when the troops were back in England again; and Esmond giving up his post of secretary to General Lumley, whose command was over, and parting with that officer with many kind expressions of good-will on the General's side, had leave to go to London, to see

if he could push his fortunes any way further, and found himself once more in his dowager aunt's comfortable quarters at Chelsea, and in greater favour than ever with the old lady. He propitiated her with a present of a comb, a fan, and a black mantle, such as the ladies of Cadiz wear, and which my Lady Viscountess pronounced became her style of beauty mightily. And she was greatly edified at hearing of that story of his rescue of the nun, and felt very little doubt but that her King James's relick, which he had always dutifully worn in his desk, had kept him out of danger, and averted the shot of the enemy. My lady made feasts for him, introduced him to more company, and pushed his fortunes with such enthusiasm and success that she got a promise of a company for him through the Lady Marlborough's interest, who was graciously pleased to accept of a diamond worth a couple of hundred guineas, which Mr. Esmond was enabled to present to her ladyship through his aunt's bounty, and who promised that she would take charge of Esmond's fortune. He had the honour to make his appearance at the Queen's drawing-room occasionally, and to frequent my Lord Marlborough's

levees. That great man received the young one with very especial favour, so Esmond's comrades said, and deigned to say that he had received the best reports of Mr. Esmond, both for courage and ability, whereon you may be sure the young gentleman made a profound bow, and expressed himself eager to serve under the most distinguished captain in the world.

Whilst his business was going on thus prosperously, Esmond had his share of pleasure, too, and made his appearance along with other young gentlemen at the coffee-houses, the theatres, and the Mall. He longed to hear of his dear mistress and her family: many a time, in the midst of the gaieties and pleasures of the town, his heart fondly reverted to them; and often as the young fellows of his society were making merry at the tavern, and calling toasts (as the fashion of that day was) over their wine, Esmond thought of persons—of two fair women, whom he had been used to adore almost, and emptied his glass with a sigh.

By this time the elder Viscountess had grown tired again of the younger, and whenever she

spoke of my lord's widow, 'twas in terms by no means complimentary towards that poor lady : the younger woman not needing her protection any longer, the elder abused her. Most of the family quarrels that I have seen in life (saving always those arising from money-disputes, when a division of twopence halfpenny will often drive the dearest relatives into war and estrangement,) spring out of jealousy and envy. Jack and Tom, born of the same family and to the same fortune, live very cordially together, not until Jack is ruined when Tom deserts him, but until Tom makes a sudden rise in prosperity, which Jack can't forgive. Ten times to one 'tis the unprosperous man that is angry, not the other who is in fault. 'Tis Mrs. Jack, who can only afford a chair, that sickens at Mrs. Tom's new coach-and-six, cries out against her sister's airs, and sets her husband against his brother. 'Tis Jack who sees his brother shaking hands with a lord (with whom Jack would like to exchange snuff-boxes himself) ; that goes home and tells his wife how poor Tom is spoiled, he fears, and no better than a sneak, parasite, and beggar on horseback. I remember how furious the coffee-

house wits were with Dick Steele when he set up his coach, and fine house in Bloomsbury: they began to forgive him when the bailiffs were after him, and abused Mr. Addison for selling Dick's country-house. And yet Dick in the spunging-house, or Dick in the Park, with his four mares and plated harness, was exactly the same gentle, kindly, improvident, jovial Dick Steele: and yet Mr. Addison was perfectly right in getting the money which was his, and not giving up the amount of his just claim, to be spent by Dick upon champagne and fiddlers, laced clothes, fine furniture, and parasites, Jew and Christian, male and female, who clung to him. As, according to the famous maxim of Monsieur de Rochefoucault, "in our friend's misfortunes there's something secretly pleasant to us;" so, on the other hand, their good fortune is disagreeable. If 'tis hard for a man to bear his own good luck, 'tis harder still for his friends to bear it for him; and but few of them ordinarily can stand that trial: whereas one of the "precious uses" of adversity is, that it is a great reconciler; that it brings back averted kindness, disarms animosity,

and causes yesterday's enemy to fling his hatred aside, and hold out a hand to the fallen friend of old days. There's pity and love, as well as envy, in the same heart and towards the same person. The rivalry stops when the competitor tumbles; and, as I view it, we should look at these agreeable and disagreeable qualities of our humanity humbly alike. They are consequent and natural, and our kindness and meanness both manly.

So you may either read the sentence, that the elder of Esmond's two kinswomen pardoned the younger her beauty, when that had lost somewhat of its freshness, perhaps; and forgot most her grievances against the other, when the subject of them was no longer prosperous and enviable; or we may say more benevolently (but the sum comes to the same figures, worked either way), that Isabella repented of her unkindness towards Rachel, when Rachel was unhappy; and bestirring herself in behalf of the poor widow and her children, gave them shelter and friendship. The ladies were quite good friends as long as the weaker one needed a protector. Before Esmond went away on his first campaign,

his mistress was still on terms of friendship (though a poor little chit, a woman that had evidently no spirit in her, &c.) with the elder Lady Castlewood; and Mistress Beatrix was allowed to be a beauty.

But between the first year of Queen Anne's reign, and the second, sad changes for the worse had taken place in the two younger ladies, at least in the elder's description of them. Rachel, Viscountess Castlewood, had no more face than a dumpling, and Mrs. Beatrix was grown quite coarse, and was losing all her beauty. Little Lord Blandford—(she never would call him Lord Blandford; his father was Lord Churchill—the King, whom he betrayed, had made him Lord Churchill, and he was Lord Churchill still)—might be making eyes at her; but his mother, that vixen of a Sarah Jennings, would never hear of such a folly. Lady Marlborough had got her to be a maid of honour at court to the Princess, but she would repent of it. The widow Francis (she was but Mrs. Francis Esmond,) was a scheming, artful, heartless hussy. She was spoiling her brat of a boy, and she would end by marrying her chaplain.

“What, Tusker!” cried Mr. Esmond, feeling a strange pang of rage and astonishment.

“Yes—Tusker, my maid’s son; and who has got all the qualities of his father, the lacquey in black, and his accomplished mamma, the waiting-woman,” cries my lady. “What, do you suppose that a sentimental widow, who will live down in that dingy dungeon of a Castlewood, where she spoils her boy, kills the poor with her drugs, has prayers twice a day and fees nobody but the chaplain—what do you suppose she can do, *mon Cousin*, but let the horrid parson, with his great square toes, and hideous little green eyes, make love to her? *Cela c’est vu, mon Cousin*. When I was a girl at Castlewood, all the chaplains fell in love with me—they’ve nothing else to do.”

My lady went on with more talk of this kind, though, in truth, Esmond had no idea of what she said further, so entirely did her first words occupy his thought. Were they true? Not all, nor half, nor a tenth part of what the garrulous old woman said, was true. Could this be so? No ear had Esmond for anything else, though his patroness chattered on for an hour.

Some young gentlemen of the town, with

whom Esmond had made acquaintance, had promised to present him to that most charming of actresses, and lively and agreeable of women, Mrs. Bracegirdle, about whom Harry's old adversary Mohun had drawn swords, a few years before my poor lord and he fell out. The famous Mr. Congreve had stamped with his high approval, to the which there was no gainfaying, this delightful person: and she was acting in Dick Steele's comedies, and finally, and for twenty-four hours after beholding her, Mr. Esmond felt himself, or thought himself, to be as violently enamoured of this lovely brunette, as were a thousand other young fellows about the city. To have once seen her was to long to behold her again; and to be offered the delightful privilege of her acquaintance was a pleasure the very idea of which set the young lieutenant's heart on fire. A man cannot live with comrades under the tents without finding out that he too is five-and-twenty. A young fellow cannot be cast down by grief and misfortune ever so severe but some night he begins to sleep sound, and some day when dinner-time comes to feel hungry for a beef-stake. Time, youth, and good health, new

scenes, and the excitement of action and a campaign, had pretty well brought Esmond's mourning to an end; and his comrades said that Don Dismal, as they called him, was Don Dismal no more. So when a party was made to dine at the Rose and go to the playhouse afterward, Esmond was as pleased as another to take his share of the bottle and the play.

How was it that the old aunt's news, or it might be scandal about Tom Tufher, caused such a strange and sudden excitement in Tom's old play-fellow? Hadn't he sworn a thousand times in his own mind, that the Lady of Castlewood, who had treated him with such kindness once, and then had left him so cruelly, was, and was to remain henceforth, indifferent to him for ever? Had his pride and his sense of justice not long since helped him to cure the pain of that desertion—was it even a pain to him now? Why, but last night as he walked across the fields and meadows to Chelsea from Pall Mall, had he not composed two or three stanzas of a song, celebrating Bracegirdle's brown eyes, and declaring them a thousand times more beautiful than the brightest blue ones that ever languished under the

lashes of an insipid fair beauty. But Tom Tusher! Tom Tusher, the waiting-woman's son, raising up *his* little eyes to his mistress! Tom Tusher presuming to think of Castlewood's widow! Rage and contempt filled Mr. Harry's heart at the very notion; the honour of the family, of which he was the chief, made it his duty to prevent so monstrous an alliance, and to chastise the upstart who could dare to think of such an insult to their house. 'Tis true Mr. Esmond often boasted of republican principles, and could remember many fine speeches he had made at College and elsewhere, with *worth* and not *birth* for a text: but Tom Tusher, to take the place of the noble Castlewood—faugh! 'twas as monstrous as King Hamlet's widow taking off her weeds for Claudius. Esmond laughed at all widows, all wives, all women; and were the banns about to be published, as no doubt they were, that very next Sunday at Walcote Church; Esmond swore that he would be present to shout no! in the face of the congregation, and to take a private revenge upon the ears of the bridegroom.

Instead of going to dinner then at the Rose that night, Mr. Esmond bade his servant pack a

portmanteau and get horses, and was at Farnham, half way on the road to Walcote, thirty miles off, before his comrades had got to their supper after the play. He bade his man give no hint to my Lady Dowager's household of the expedition on which he was going: and as Chelsea was distant from London, the roads bad, and infested by foot-pads; and Esmond, often in the habit, when engaged in a party of pleasure, of lying at a friend's lodging in town, there was no need that his old aunt should be disturbed at his absence—indeed nothing more delighted the old lady than to fancy that *mon Cousin*, the incorrigible young sinner, was abroad boxing the watch, or scouring St. Giles's. When she was not at her books of devotion, she thought Etheridge and Sedley very good reading. She had a hundred pretty stories about Rochester, Harry Jermyn, and Hamilton; and if Esmond would but have run away with the wife even of a citizen, 'tis my belief she would have pawned her diamonds (the best of them went to our Lady of Chailot) to pay his damages.

My lord's little house of Walcote, which he inhabited before he took his title and occupied

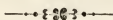
the house of Castlewood—lies about a mile from Winchester, and his widow had returned to Walcote after my lord's death as a place always dear to her, and where her earliest and happiest days had been spent, cheerfuller than Castlewood, which was too large for her straitened means, and giving her, too, the protection of the ex-Dean, her father. The young Viscount had a year's schooling at the famous college there, with Mr. Tusher as his governor. So much news of them Mr. Esmond had had during the past year from the old Viscountess, his own father's widow; from the young one there had never been a word.

Twice or thrice in his benefactor's lifetime, Esmond had been to Walcote; and, now, taking but a couple of hours rest only at the inn on the road, he was up again long before day-break, and made such good speed, that he was at Walcote by two o'clock of the day. He rid to the inn of the village, where he alighted and sent a man thence to Mr. Tusher, with a message that a gentleman from London would speak with him on urgent business. The messenger came back to say the Doctor was in town, most likely at

prayers in the Cathedral. My Lady Viscountess was there too ; she always went to Cathedral prayers every day.

The horses belonged to the post-house at Winchester. Esmond mounted again, and rode on to the George : whence he walked, leaving his grumbling domestick at last happy with a dinner, straight to the Cathedral. The organ was playing : the winter's day was already growing grey : as he passed under the street-arch into the cathedral-yard and made his way into the ancient solemn edifice.

CHAPTER VI.



THE 29TH DECEMBER.

THERE was scarce a score of persons in the Cathedral besides the Dean and some of his clergy, and the choristers, young and old, that performed the beautiful evening prayer. But Dr. Tusher was one of the officiants, and read from the eagle, in an authoritative voice, and a great black periwig; and in the stalls, still in her black widow's hood, sat Esmond's dear mistress, her son by her side, very much grown, and indeed a noble-looking youth, with his mother's eyes, and his father's curling brown hair, that fell over his *point de Venise*—a pretty picture such as Vandyke might have painted. Mons. Rigaud's portrait of my Lord Viscount, done at Paris afterwards, gives but a French version of his manly, frank English face. When

he looked up there were two sapphire beams out of his eyes, such as no painter's palette has the colour to match, I think. On this day there was not much chance of seeing that particular beauty of my young lord's countenance ; for the truth is, he kept his eyes shut for the most part, and, the anthem being rather long, was asleep.

But the musick ceasing, my lord woke up, looking about him, and his eyes lighting on Mr. Esmond, who was sitting opposite him, gazing with no small tenderness and melancholy upon two persons who had had so much of his heart for so many years ; Lord Castlewood, with a start, pulled at his mother's sleeve (her face had scarce been lifted from her book), and said, "Look, mother !" so loud, that Esmond could hear on the other side of the church, and the old Dean on his throned stall. Lady Castlewood looked for an instant as her son bade her, and held up a warning finger to Frank ; Esmond felt his whole face flush, and his heart throbbing, as that dear lady beheld him once more. The rest of the prayers were speedily over : Mr. Esmond did not hear them ; nor did his mistress, very likely, whose hood went more closely over her

face, and who never lifted her head again until the service was over, the blessing given, and Mr. Dean, and his procession of ecclesiasticks, out of the inner chapel.

Young Castlewood came clambering over the stalls before the clergy were fairly gone, and running up to Esmond, eagerly embraced him. "My dear, dearest old Harry," he said, "are you come back? Have you been to the wars? You'll take me with you when you go again? Why didn't you write to us? Come to mother."

Mr. Esmond could hardly say more than a God bless you, my boy, for his heart was very full and grateful at all this tenderness on the lad's part; and he was as much moved at seeing Frank, as he was fearful about that other interview which was now to take place; for he knew not if the widow would reject him as she had done so cruelly a year ago.

"It was kind of you to come back to us, Henry," Lady Esmond said. "I thought you might come."

"We read of the fleet coming to Portsmouth. Why did you not come from Portsmouth?"

Frank asked, or my Lord Viscount as he now must be called.

Esmond had thought of that too. He would have given one of his eyes so that he might see his dear friends again once more ; but believing that his mistress had forbidden him her house, he had obeyed her, and remained at a distance.

“ You had but to ask, and you knew I would be here,” he said.

She gave him her hand, her little fair hand: there was only her marriage ring on it. The quarrel was all over. The year of grief and estrangement was passed. They never had been separated. His mistress had never been out of his mind all that time. No, not once. No, not in the prison ; nor in the camp ; nor on shore before the enemy ; nor at sea under the stars of solemn midnight, nor as he watched the glorious rising of the dawn : not even at the table where he sat carousing with friends, or at the theatre yonder where he tried to fancy that other eyes were brighter than hers. Brighter eyes there might be, and faces more beautiful, but none so dear—no voice so sweet as that of his beloved mistress, who had been sister, mother, goddess to

him during his youth—goddeſs now no more, for he knew of her weakneſſes ; and by thought, by ſuffering, and that experience it brings, was older now than ſhe ; but more fondly cheriſhed as woman perhaps than ever ſhe had been adored as divinity. What is it ? Where lies it ? the ſecret which makes one little hand the deareſt of all ? Whoever can unriddle that myſtery ? Here ſhe was, her ſon by his ſide, his dear boy. Here ſhe was, weeping and happy. She took his hand in both hers ; he felt her tears. It was a rapture of reconciliation.

“ Here comes Squaretoes,” ſays Frank.
“ Here’s Tuſher.”

Tuſher, indeed, now appeared, creaking on his great heels. Mr. Tom had diveſted himſelf of his alb or ſurplice, and came forward habited in his caſſock and great black periwig. How had Harry Esmond ever been for a moment jealous of this fellow ?

“ Give us thy hand, Tom Tuſher,” he ſaid. The chaplain made him a very low and ſtately bow. “ I am charmed to ſee Captain Esmond,” ſays he. “ My lord and I have read the *Reddas incolumem precor*, and applied it, I am ſure, to

you. You come back with Gaditanian laurels : when I heard you were bound thither, I wished, I am sure, I was another Septimius. My Lord Viscount, your lordship remembers *Septimi, Gades aditure mecum?* ”

“ There’s an angle of earth that I love better than Gades, Tusker,” says Mr. Esmond. “ ’Tis that one where your reverence hath a parsonage, and where our youth was brought up.”

“ A house that has so many sacred recollections to me,” says Mr. Tusker (and Harry remembered how Tom’s father used to flog him there)—“ a house near to that of my respected patron, my most honoured patroness, must ever be a dear abode to me. But, madam, the verger waits to close the gates on your ladyship.”

“ And Harry’s coming home to supper. Huzzay ! huzzay ! ” cries my lord. “ Mother, shall I run home and bid Beatrix put her ribbons on. Beatrix is a maid of honour, Harry. Such a fine set-up minx ! ”

“ Your heart was never in the Church, Harry,” the widow said, in her sweet low tone, as they walked away together. (Now, it seemed they had never been parted, and again, as if they had

been ages afunder.) “ I always thought you had no vocation that way ; and that ’twas a pity to shut you out from the world. You would but have pined and chafed at Castlewood : and ’tis better you should make a name for yourself. I often said so to my dear lord. How he loved you ! ’Twas my lord that made you stay with us.”

“ I asked no better than to stay near you always,” said Mr. Esmond.

“ But to go was best, Harry. When the world cannot give peace, you will know where to find it ; but one of your strong imagination and eager desires must try the world first before he tires of it. ’Twas not to be thought of, or if it once was, it was only by my selfishness, that you should remain as chaplain to a country gentleman and tutor to a little boy. You are of the blood of the Esmonds, kinsman ; and that was always wild in youth. Look at Francis. He is but fifteen, and I scarce can keep him in my nest. His talk is all of war and pleasure, and he longs to serve in the next campaign. Perhaps he and the young Lord Churchill shall go the next. Lord Marlborough has been good to us.

You know how kind they were in my misfortune. And so was your—your father's widow. No one knows how good the world is, till grief comes to try us. 'Tis through my Lady Marlborough's goodness that Beatrix hath her place at Court; and Frank is under my Lord Chamberlain. And the dowager lady, your father's widow, has promised to provide for you—has she not?"

Esmond said "Yes. As far as present favour went, Lady Castlewood was very good to him. And should her mind change," he added gaily, "as ladies' minds will, I am strong enough to bear my own burthen, and make my way somehow. Not by the sword very likely. Thousands have a better genius for that than I, but there are many ways in which a young man of good parts and education can get on in the world; and I am pretty sure, one way or other, of promotion?" Indeed, he had found patrons already in the army, and amongst persons very able to serve him, too; and told his mistress of the flattering aspect of fortune. They walked as though they had never been parted, slowly, with the grey twilight closing round them.

“And now we are drawing near to home,” she continued, “I knew you would come, Harry, if—if it was but to forgive me for having spoken unjustly to you after that horrid—horrid misfortune. I was half frantick [with grief then when I saw you. And I know now—they have told me. That wretch, whose name I can never mention, even has said it: how you tried to avert the quarrel, and would have taken it on yourself, my poor child: but it was God’s will that I should be punished, and that my dear lord should fall.”

“He gave me his blessing on his death-bed,” Esmond said. “Thank God for that legacy!”

“Amen, amen! dear Henry,” says the lady, pressing his arm. “I knew it. Mr. Atterbury, of St. Bride’s, who was called to him, told me so. And I thanked God, too, and in my prayers ever since, remembered it.”

“You had spared me many a bitter night, had you told me sooner,” Mr. Esmond said.

“I know it, I know it,” she answered, in a tone of such sweet humility, as made Esmond repent that he should ever have dared to reproach her. “I know how wicked my heart has been;

and I have suffered, too, my dear. I confessed to Mr. Atterbury—I must not tell any more. He—I said I would not write to you or go to you—and it was better, even, that having parted, we should part. But I knew you would come back—I own that. That is no one's fault. And to-day, Henry, in the anthem, when they sang it, 'When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream,' I thought, yes, like them that dream—them that dream. And then it went, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy; and he that goeth forth and weepeth, shall doubtless come home again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him;' I looked up from the book, and saw you. I was not surprised when I saw you. I knew you would come, my dear, and saw the gold sunshine round your head."

She smiled an almost wild smile, as she looked up at him. The moon was up by this time, glittering keen in the frosty sky. He could see, for the first time now clearly, her sweet careworn face.

"Do you know what day it is?" she continued. "It is the 29th of December—it is your

birthday! But last year we did not drink it—no, no. My lord was cold, and my Harry was likely to die; and my brain was in a fever; and we had no wine. But now—now you are come again, bringing your sheaves with you, my dear.” She burst into a wild flood of weeping as she spoke; she laughed and sobbed on the young man’s heart, crying out wildly, “bringing your sheaves with you—your sheaves with you!”

As he had sometimes felt, gazing up from the deck at midnight into the boundless starlit depths overhead, in a rapture of devout wonder at that endless brightness and beauty—in some such a way now, the depth of this pure devotion (which was, for the first time, revealed to him quite) smote upon him, and filled his heart with thanksgiving. Gracious God, who was he, weak and friendless creature, that such a love should be poured out upon him? Not in vain, not in vain has he lived,—hard and thankless should he be to think so—that has such a treasure given him. What is ambition compared to that? but selfish vanity. To be rich, to be famous? What do these profit a year hence, when other names sound louder than yours, when you lie hidden away under ground,

along with the idle titles engraven on your coffin ? But only true love lives after you,—follows your memory with secret blessing,—or precedes you, and intercedes for you. *Non omnis moriar*,—if dying, I yet live in a tender heart or two ; nor am lost and hopeless living, if a fainter departed soul still loves and prays for me.

“ If—if ’tis so, dear lady,” Mr. Esmond said, “ why should I ever leave you ? If God hath given me this great boon,—and near or far from me, as I know now,—the heart of my dearest mistress follows me ; let me have that blessing near me, nor ever part with it till life separate us. Come away—leave this Europe, this place which has so many sad recollections for you. Begin a new life in a new world. My good lord often talked of visiting that land in Virginia which King Charles gave us—gave his ancestor. Frank will give us that. No man there will ask if there is a blot on my name, or inquire in the woods what my title is.”

“ And my children,—and my duty,—and my good father ?—Henry,” she broke out. “ He has none but me now ; for soon my sister will leave him, and the old man will be alone. He has

conformed since the new Queen's reign ; and here in Winchester, where they love him, they have found a church for him. When the children leave me, I will stay with him. I cannot follow them into the great world, where their way lies—it scares me. They will come and visit me ; and you will, sometimes, Henry—yes, sometimes, as now, in the Holy Advent season, when I have seen and blessed you once more.”

“ I would leave all to follow you,” said Mr. Esmond ; “ and can you not be as generous for me, dear lady ? ”

“ Hush, boy ! ” she said, and it was with a mother's sweet plaintive tone and look that she spoke. “ The world is beginning for you. For me, I have been so weak and sinful that I must leave it, and pray out an expiation, dear Henry. Had we houses of religion as there were once, and many divines of our church would have them again, I often think I would retire to one and pass my life in penance. But I would love you still—yes, there is no sin in such a love as mine now ; and my dear lord in heaven may see my heart ; and knows the tears that have washed my sin away—and now—now my duty is here, by

my children whilst they need me, and by my poor old father, and"—

"And not by me?" Henry said.

"Hush," she said again, and raised her hand up to his lip. "I have been your nurse. You could not see me, Harry, when you were in the small-pox, and I came and fate by you. Ah! I prayed that I might die, but it would have been in sin, Henry. Oh, it is horrid to look back to that time. It is over now and past, and it has been forgiven me. When you need me again I will come ever so far. When your heart is wounded, then come to me, my dear. Be silent! let me say all. You never loved me, dear Henry—no, you do not now, and I thank Heaven for it. I used to watch you, and knew by a thousand signs that it was so. Do you remember how glad you were to go away to College? 'Twas I sent you. I told my papa that, and Mr. Atterbury too, when I spoke to him in London. And they both gave me absolution—both—and they are godly men having authority to bind and to loose. And they forgave me, as my dear lord forgave me before he went to heaven."

“I think the angels are not all in heaven,” Mr. Esmond said. And as a brother folds a sister to his heart; and as a mother cleaves to her son’s breast—so for a few moments Esmond’s beloved mistress came to him and blessed him.

CHAPTER VII.



I AM MADE WELCOME AT WALCOTE.

AS they came up to the house at Walcote, the windows from within were lighted up with friendly welcome; the supper-table was spread in the oak-parlour; it seemed as if forgiveness and love were awaiting the returning prodigal. Two or three familiar faces of domesticks were on the look-out at the porch—the old housekeeper was there, and young Lockwood from Castlewood in my lord's livery of tawney and blue. His dear mistress pressed his arm as they passed into the hall. Her eyes beamed out on him with affection indescribable. "Welcome," was all she said: as she looked up, putting back her fair curls and black hood. A sweet rosy smile blushed on her face: Harry thought he had never seen her look so charming.

Her face was lighted with a joy that was brighter than beauty—she took a hand of her son who was in the hall waiting his mother—she did not quit Esmond's arm.

“Welcome, Harry!” my young lord echoed after her. “Here, we are all come to say so. Here's old Pincot, hasn't she grown handsome?” and Pincot, who was older, and no handsomer than usual, made a curtsy to the Captain as she called Esmond, and told my lord to “Have done, now.”

“And here's Jack Lockwood. He'll make a famous grenadier, Jack; and so shall I; we'll both list under you, Cousin. As soon as I am seventeen I go to the army—every gentleman goes to the army. Look! who comes here—ho, ho!” he burst into a laugh. “'Tis Mistress Trix, with a new ribbon; I knew she would put one on as soon as she heard a Captain was coming to supper.”

This laughing colloquy took place in the hall of Walcote House: in the midst of which is a staircase that leads from an open gallery, where are the doors of the sleeping chambers: and from one of these, a wax candle in her hand,

and illuminating her, came Mistress Beatrix—the light falling indeed upon the scarlet ribbon which she wore, and upon the most brilliant white neck in the world.

Esmond had left a child, and found a woman, grown beyond the common height ; and arrived at such a dazzling completeness of beauty, that his eyes might well show surprise and delight at beholding her. In hers there was a brightness so lustrous and melting, that I have seen a whole assembly follow her as if by an attraction irresistible : and that night the great Duke was at the play-house after Ramillies, every soul turned and looked (she chanced to enter at the opposite side of the theatre at the same moment) at her, and not at him. She was a brown beauty : that is, her eyes, hair, and eye-brows and eye-lashes, were dark : her hair curling with rich undulations, and waving over her shoulders ; but her complexion was as dazzling white as snow in sunshine ; except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips, which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full, and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were

fire, whose look was love, whose voice was the sweetest low song, whose shape was perfect symmetry, health, decision, activity, whose foot as it planted itself on the ground was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect grace—agile as a nymph, lofty as a queen—now melting, now imperious, now sarcastick, there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful. As he thinks of her, he who writes, feels young again, and remembers a paragon.

So she came holding her dress with one fair rounded arm, and her taper before her, tripping down the stair to greet Esmond.

“She hath put on her scarlet stockings and white shoes,” says my lord, still laughing. “O, my fine mistress! is this the way you set your cap at the Captain!” She approached, shining smiles upon Esmond, who could look at nothing but her eyes. She advanced holding forward her head, as if she would have him kiss her as he used to do when she was a child.

“Stop,” she said, “I am grown too big! Welcome, cousin Harry,” and she made him an arch curtsy, sweeping down to the ground

almost, with the most gracious bend, looking up the while with the brightest eyes and sweetest smile. Love seemed to radiate from her. Harry eyed her with such a rapture as the first lover is described as having by Milton.

“*N'est ce pas ?*” says my lady, in a low, sweet voice, still hanging on his arm.

Esmond turned round with a start and a blush, as he met his mistress's clear eyes. He had forgotten her, wrapt in admiration of the *filia pulcrrior*.

“Right foot forward, toe turned out, so : now drop the curtsy, and show the red stockings, Trix. They've silver clocks, Harry. The dowager sent 'em. She went to put 'em on,” cries my lord.

“Hush, you stupid child !” says Miss, smothering her brother with kisses ; and then she must come and kiss her mamma, looking all the while at Harry, over his mistress's shoulder. And if she did not kiss him, she gave him both her hands, and then took one of his in both hands, and said, “Oh, Harry, we're so, so glad you're come !”

“There are woodcocks for supper,” says

my lord: "Huzzay! It was such a hungry fermon."

"And it is the 29th of December; and our Harry has come home."

"Huzzay, old Pincot!" again says my lord; and my dear lady's lips looked as if they were trembling with a prayer. She would have Harry lead in Beatrix to the supper-room, going herself with my young Lord Viscount; and to this party came Tom Tusker directly, whom four at least out of the company of five, wished away. Away he went, however, as soon as the sweetmeats were put down, and then, by the great crackling fire, his mistress or Beatrix with her blushing graces filling his glass for him, Harry told the story of his campaign, and passed the most delightful night his life had ever known. The sun was up long ere he was, so deep, sweet, and refreshing was his slumber. He woke as if angels had been watching at his bed all night. I daresay one that was as pure and loving as an angel had blest his sleep with her prayers.

Next morning the chaplain read prayers to the little household at Walcote, as the custom was; Esmond thought Mistress Beatrix did not

listen to Tusker's exhortation much: her eyes were wandering everywhere during the service, at least whenever he looked up he met them. Perhaps he also was not very attentive to his Reverence the chaplain. "This might have been my life," he was thinking; "this might have been my duty from now till old age. Well, were it not a pleasant one to be with these dear friends and part from 'em no more? Until—until the destined lover comes and takes away pretty Beatrix"—and the best part of Tom Tusker's exposition, which may have been very learned and eloquent, was quite lost to poor Harry by this vision of the destined lover, who put the preacher out.

All the while of the prayers, Beatrix knelt a little way before Harry Esmond. The red stockings were changed for a pair of grey, and black shoes, in which her feet looked to the full as pretty. All the roses of spring could not vie with the brightness of her complexion; Esmond thought he had never seen anything like the funny lustre of her eyes. My Lady Viscountess looked fatigued, as if with watching, and her face was pale.

Miss Beatrix remarked these signs of indisposition in her mother, and deplored them. "I am an old woman," says my lady, with a kind smile; "I cannot hope to look as young as you do, my dear."

"She'll never look as good as you do if she lives till she's a hundred," says my lord, taking his mother by the waist, and kissing her hand.

"Do I look very wicked, cousin?" says Beatrix, turning full round on Esmond, with her pretty face so close under his chin, that the soft perfumed hair touched it. She laid her finger-tips on his sleeve as she spoke; and he put his other hand over hers.

"I'm like your looking-glass," says he, "and that can't flatter you."

"He means that you are always looking at him, my dear," says her mother, archly. Beatrix ran away from Esmond at this, and flew to her mamma, whom she kissed, stopping my lady's mouth with her pretty hand.

"And Harry is very good to look at," says my lady, with her fond eyes regarding the young man.

"If'tis good to see a happy face," says he,

“you see that.” My lady said Amen, with a sigh; and Harry thought the memory of her dead lord rose up and rebuked her back again into sadness; for her face lost the smile, and resumed its look of melancholy.

“Why, Harry, how fine we look in our scarlet and silver, and our black periwig,” cries my lord. “Mother, I am tired of my own hair. When shall I have a perruke? Where did you get your steenkirk, Harry?”

“It’s some of my Lady Dowager’s lace,” says Harry; “she gave me this and a number of other fine things.”

“My Lady Dowager isn’t such a bad woman,” my lord continued.

“She’s not so—so red as she’s painted,” says Miss Beatrix.

Her brother broke into a laugh. “I’ll tell her you said so; by the Lord, Trix, I will,” he cries out.

“She’ll know that you hadn’t the wit to say it, my lord,” says Miss Beatrix.

“We won’t quarrel the first day Harry’s here, will we, mother?” said the young lord. “We’ll see if we can get on to the new year without a

fight. Have some of this Christmas pie? and here comes the tankard; no, it's Pincot with the tea."

"Will the Captain choose a dish?" asks Mistress Beatrix.

"I say, Harry," my lord goes on, "I'll show thee my horses after breakfast; and we'll go a bird-netting to-night, and on Monday there's a cock-match at Winchester—do you love cock-fighting, Harry?—between the gentlemen of Suffex and the gentlemen of Hampshire, at ten pound the battle, and fifty pound the odd battle, to show one-and-twenty cocks."

"And what will you do, Beatrix, to amuse our kinsman?" asks my lady.

"I'll listen to him," says Beatrix; "I am sure he has a hundred things to tell us. And I'm jealous already of the Spanish ladies. Was that a beautiful nun at Cadiz that you rescued from the soldiers? Your man talked of it last night in the kitchen, and Mrs. Betty told me this morning as she combed my hair. And he says you must be in love, for you sat on deck all night, and scribbled verses all day in your table-book." Harry thought if he had wanted

a subject for verses yesterday, to-day he had found one: and not all the Lindamiras and Ardelias of the poets were half so beautiful as this young creature; but he did not say so, though some one did for him.

This was his dear lady who, after the meal was over, and the young people were gone, began talking of her children with Mr. Esmond, and of the characters of one and the other, and of her hopes and fears for both of them. "'Tis not while they are at home," she said, "and in their mother's nest, I fear for them—'tis when they are gone into the world whither I shall not be able to follow them. Beatrix will begin her service next year. You may have heard a rumour about—about my Lord Blandford. They were both children; and it is but idle talk. I know my kinswoman would never let him make such a poor marriage as our Beatrix would be. There's scarce a princess in Europe that she thinks is good enough for him or for her ambition."

"There's not a princess in Europe to compare with her," says Esmond.

"In beauty? No, perhaps not," answered

my lady. "She is most beautiful, isn't she? 'Tis not a mother's partiality that deceives me. I marked you yesterday when she came down the stair: and read it in your face. We look when you don't fancy us looking, and see better than you think, dear Harry: and just now when they spoke about your poems—you writ pretty lines when you were but a boy—you thought Beatrix was a pretty subject for verse, did not you, Harry? (The gentleman could only blush for a reply.) And so she is—nor are you the first her pretty face has captivated. 'Tis quickly done. Such a pair of bright eyes as hers learn their power very soon, and use it very early." And, looking at him keenly with hers, the fair widow left him.

And so it is—a pair of bright eyes with a dozen glances suffice to subdue a man; to enslave him, and enflame him: to make him even forget: they dazzle him so that the past becomes straight-way dim to him: and he so prizes them that he would give all his life to possess 'em. What is the fond love of dearest friends compared to this treasure? Is memory as strong as expectancy? fruition, as hunger? gratitude, as desire? I

have looked at royal diamonds in the jewel rooms in Europe, and thought how wars have been made about 'em : Mogul sovereigns deposed and strangled for them, or ransomed with them : millions expended to buy them ; and daring lives lost in digging out the little shining toys that I value no more than the button in my hat. And so there are other glittering baubles (of rare water too) for which men have been set to kill and quarrel ever since mankind began ; and which last but for a score of years, when their sparkle is over. Where are those jewels now that beamed under Cleopatra's forehead, or shone in the sockets of Helen ?

The second day after Esmond's coming to Walcote, Tom Tufher had leave to take a holiday and went off in his very best gown and bands to court the young woman whom his Reverence desired to marry, and who was not a viscount's widow, as it turned out, but a brewer's relict at Southampton, with a couple of thousand pounds to her fortune : for honest Tom's heart was under such excellent controul, that Venus herself without a portion would never have caused it to flutter. So he rode away on his heavy-

paced gelding to pursue his jog-trot loves, leaving Esmond to the society of his dear mistress and her daughter, and with his young lord for a companion, who was charmed not only to see an old friend, but to have the tutor and his Latin books put out of the way.

The boy talked of things and people, and not a little about himself, in his frank artless way. 'Twas easy to see that he and his sister had the better of their fond mother, for the first place in whose affections though they fought constantly, and though the kind lady persisted that she loved both equally, 'twas not difficult to understand that Frank was his mother's darling and favourite. He ruled the whole household (always excepting rebellious Beatrix) not less now than when he was a child marshalling the village boys in playing at soldiers, and caning them lustily too like the sturdiest corporal. As for Tom Tusher, his Reverence treated the young lord with that politeness and deference which he always showed for a great man, whatever his age or his stature was. Indeed with respect to this young one, it was impossible not to love him, so frank and winning were his manners, his beauty, his gaiety,

the ring of his laughter, and the delightful tone of his voice. Wherever he went, he charmed and domineered. I think his old grandfather, the Dean, and the grim old housekeeper, Mrs. Pincot, were as much his slaves as his mother was: and as for Esmond, he found himself presently submitting to a certain fascination the boy had, and flaving it like the rest of the family. The pleasure which he had in Frank's mere company and converse, exceeded that which he ever enjoyed in the society of any other man, however delightful in talk, or famous for wit. His presence brought sunshine into a room, his laugh, his prattle, his noble beauty and brightness of look cheered and charmed indescribably. At the least tale of sorrow, his hands were in his purse, and he was eager with sympathy and bounty. The way in which women loved and petted him, when, a year or two afterwards, he came upon the world, yet a mere boy, and the follies which they did for him, (as indeed he for them,) recalled the career of Rochester, and outdid the successes of Grammont. His very creditors loved him; and the hardest usurers, and some of the rigid prudes of the other sex too,

could deny him nothing. He was no more witty than another man, but what he said, he said and looked as no man else could say or look it. I have seen the women at the comedy at Bruxelles crowd round him in the lobby: and as he sat on the stage more people looked at him than at the actors, and watched him; and I remember at Ramillies, when he was hit, and fell, a great big red-haired Scotch ferceant flung his halberd down, burst out a-crying like a woman, seizing him up as if he had been an infant, and carrying him out of the fire. This brother and sister were the most beautiful couple ever seen: though after he winged away from the maternal nest this pair were seldom together.

Sitting at dinner two days after Esmond's arrival (it was the last day of the year), and so happy a one to Harry Esmond, that to enjoy it was quite worth all the previous pain which he had endured and forgot: my young lord, filling a bumper, and bidding Harry take another, drank to his sister, saluting her under the title of "Marchioness."

"Marchioness!" says Harry, not without a

pang of wonder, for he was curious and jealous already.

“Nonfense, my Lord,” says Beatrix, with a toss of her head. My Lady Viscountess looked up for a moment at Esmond, and cast her eyes down.

“The Marchioness of Blandford,” says Frank, “don’t you know—hath not Rouge Dragon told you? (My lord used to call the dowager at Chelsea by this and other names.) Blandford has a lock of her hair: the Dukes found him on his knees to Mistress ’Trix, and boxed his ears, and said Dr. Hare should whip him.”

“I wish Mr. Tusher would whip you too,” says Beatrix.

My lady only said: “I hope you tell none of these silly stories elsewhere than at home, Francis.”

“’Tis true, on my word,” continues Frank: “look at Harry scowling, mother, and see how Beatrix blushes as red as the silver-clocked stockings.”

“I think we had best leave the gentlemen to their wine, and their talk,” says Mistress Beatrix, rising up with the air of a young queen, tossing

her rustling, flowing draperies about her, and quitting the room, followed by her mother.

Lady Castlewood again looked at Esmond, as she stooped down and kissed Frank. "Do not tell those silly stories, child," she said : "do not drink much wine, sir ; Harry never loved to drink wine." And she went away, too, in her black robes, looking back on the young man with her fair, fond face.

"Egad ! it's true," says Frank, sipping his wine with the air of a lord. "What think you of this Lisbon—real Collares ? 'Tis better than your heady port : we got it out of one of the Spanish ships that came from Vigo last year : my mother bought it at Southampton, as the ship was lying there,—the *Rose*, Captain Hawkins."

"Why, I came home in that ship," says Harry.

"And it brought home a good fellow and good wine," says my lord. "I say, Harry, I wish thou hadst not that cursed bar sinister."

"And why not the bar sinister ?" asks the other.

"Suppose I go to the army and am killed—

every gentleman goes to the army—who is to take care of the women? 'Trix will never stop at home; mother's in love with you,—yes, I think mother's in love with you. She was always praising you, and always talking about you; and when she went to Southampton, to see the ship, I found her out. But you see it is impossible: we are of the oldest blood in England; we came in with the Conqueror; we were only baronets,—but what then? we were forced into that. James the First forced our great grandfather. We are above titles; we old English gentry don't want 'em; the Queen can make a duke any day. Look at Blandford's father, Duke Churchill, and Dukes Jennings, what were they, Harry? Damn it, sir, what are they, to turn up their noses at us? Where were they, when our ancestor rode with King Henry at Agincourt, and filled up the French king's cup after Poitiers? 'Fore George, sir, why shouldn't Blandford marry Beatrix? By G—! he *shall* marry Beatrix, or tell me the reason why. We'll marry with the best blood of England, and none but the best blood of England. You are an Esmond, and you can't

help your birth, my boy. Let's have another bottle. What! no more? I've drunk three parts of this myself. I had many a night with my father; you stood to him like a man, Harry. You backed your blood; you can't help your misfortune, you know,—no man can help that."

The elder said he would go in to his mistress's tea-table. The young lad, with a heightened colour and voice, began singing a snatch of a song, and marched out of the room. Esmond heard him presently calling his dogs about him, and cheering and talking to them; and by a hundred of his looks and gestures, tricks of voice and gait, was reminded of the dead lord, Frank's father.

And so, the sylvester night passed away; the family parted long before midnight, Lady Castlewood remembering, no doubt, former New Years' Eves, when healths were drunk, and laughter went round in the company of him, to whom years, past, and present, and future, were to be as one; and so cared not to sit with her children and hear the Cathedral bells ringing the birth of the year 1703. Esmond heard the chimes as he sat in his own chamber, ruminating

by the blazing fire there, and listened to the last notes of them, looking out from his window towards the city, and the great grey towers of the Cathedral lying under the frosty sky, with the keen stars shining above.

The sight of these brilliant orbs no doubt made him think of other luminaries. “And so her eyes have already done execution,” thought Esmond—“on whom?—who can tell me?” Luckily his kinsman was by, and Esmond knew he would have no difficulty in finding out Mistress Beatrix’s history from the simple talk of the boy.

CHAPTER VIII.



FAMILY TALK.

WHAT Harry admired and submitted to in the pretty lad, his kinsman, was (for why should he resist it?) the calmness of patronage which my young lord assumed, as if to command was his undoubted right, and all the world (below his degree) ought to bow down to Viscount Castlewood.

“I know my place, Harry,” he said. “I’m not proud—the boys at Winchester College say I’m proud: but I’m not proud. I am simply Francis James Viscount Castlewood in the peerage of Ireland. I might have been (do you know that?) Francis James, Marquis and Earl of Esmond in that of England. The late lord refused the title which was offered to him by my godfather, his late Majesty. You should know that—you are

of our family, you know—you cannot help your bar sinister, Harry, my dear fellow ; and you belong to one of the best families in England, in spite of that ; and you stood by my father, and by G— ! I'll stand by you. You shall never want a friend, Harry, while Francis James Viscount Castlewood has a shilling. It's now 1703—I shall come of age in 1709. I shall go back to Castlewood ; I shall live at Castlewood ; I shall build up the house. My property will be pretty well restored by then. The late viscount mismanaged my property, and left it in a very bad state. My mother is living close, as you see, and keeps me in a way hardly befitting a peer of these realms ; for I have but a pair of horses, a governor, and a man that is valet and groom. But when I am of age, these things will be set right, Harry. Our house will be as it should be. You'll always come to Castlewood, won't you ? You shall always have your two rooms in the court kept for you ; and if anybody flights you, d—— them ! let them have a care of *me*. I shall marry early--'Trix will be a duchess by that time, most likely ; for a cannon-ball may knock over his Grace any day, you know."

“How?” says Harry.

“Hush, my dear!” says my Lord Viscount. “You are of the family—you are faithful to us, by George, and I tell you everything. Blandford will marry her—or—” and here he put his little hand on his sword—“you understand the rest. Blandford knows which of us two is the best weapon. At small-sword, or back-sword, or sword and dagger, if he likes: I can beat him. I have tried him, Harry; and begad, he knows I am a man not to be trifled with.”

“But you do not mean,” says Harry, concealing his laughter, but not his wonder, “that you can force my Lord Blandford, the son of the first man of this kingdom, to marry your sister at sword’s point?”

“I mean to say that we are cousins by the mother’s side, though that’s nothing to boast of. I mean to say that an Esmond is as good as a Churchill; and when the King comes back, the Marquis of Esmond’s sister may be a match for any nobleman’s daughter in the kingdom. There are but two marquises in all England, William Herbert, Marquis of Powis, and Francis James, Marquis of Esmond; and hark you,

Harry, now swear you'll never mention this. Give me your honour as a gentleman, for you *are* a gentleman, though you are a——”

“ Well, well,” says Harry, a little impatient.

“ Well, then, when after my late viscount's misfortune, my mother went up with us to London, to ask for justice against you all (as for Mohun, I'll have his blood, as sure as my name is Francis Viscount Esmond), we went to stay with our cousin, my Lady Marlborough, with whom we had quarrelled for ever so long. But when misfortune came, she stood by her blood:—so did the Dowager Viscountess stand by her blood,—so did you. Well, sir, whilst my mother was petitioning the late Prince of Orange—for I will never call him king—and while you were in prison, we lived at my Lord Marlborough's house, who was only a little there, being away with the army in Holland. And then . . . I say, Harry, you won't tell, now ? ”

Harry again made a vow of secrecy.

“ Well, there used to be all sorts of fun, you know : my Lady Marlborough was very fond of us, and she said I was to be her page ; and she got 'Trix to be a maid of honour, and while she was

up in her room crying, we used to be always having fun, you know ; and the Duchefs used to kiss me, and so did her daughters, and Blandford fell tremendous in love with 'Trix, and she liked him ; and one day he—he kissed her behind a door—he did though,—and the Duchefs caught him, and she banged such a box of the ear both to 'Trix and Blandford—you should have seen it ! And then she said that we must leave directly, and abused my mamma, who was cognizant of the business ; but she wasn't,—never thinking about anything but father. And so we came down to Walcote. Blandford being locked up, and not allowed to see 'Trix. But I got at him. I climbed along the gutter, and in through the window, where he was crying.

“ ‘ Marquis,’ says I, when he had opened it and helped me in, ‘ you know I wear a sword,’ for I had brought it.

“ ‘ O, viscount,’ says he—‘ O, my dearest Frank !’ and he flung himself into my arms, and burst out a-crying. ‘ I do love Mistress Beatrix so, that I shall die, if I don’t have her.’

“ ‘ My dear Blandford,’ says I, ‘ you are young to think of marrying ;’ for he was but

fifteen, and a young fellow at that age can scarce do so, you know.

“ ‘But I’ll wait twenty years, if she’ll have me,’ says he. ‘I’ll never marry—no never, never, never, marry anybody but her. No, not a princess, though they would have me do it ever so. If Beatrix will wait for me, her Blandford swears he will be faithful.’ And he wrote a paper (it wasn’t spelt right, for he wrote ‘I’m ready to *sine with my blode*,’ which you know, Harry, isn’t the way of spelling it), and vowing that he would marry none other but the Honourable Mistress Gertrude Beatrix Esmond, only sister of his dearest friend Francis James, fourth Viscount Esmond. And so I gave him a locket of her hair.”

“A locket of her hair!” cries Esmond.

“Yes. ‘Trix gave me one after the fight with the Duchess that very day. I’m sure I didn’t want it; and so I gave it him, and we kissed at parting, and said—‘Good-bye, brother.’ And I got back through the gutter; and we set off home that very evening. And he went to King’s College, in Cambridge, and *I’m* going to Cambridge soon; and if he doesn’t stand to his

promise (for he's only wrote once,)—he knows I wear a sword, Harry. Come along, and let's go see the cocking-match at Winchester."

" But I say," he added, laughing, after a pause, "I don't think 'Trix will break her heart about him. Law blefs you! Whenever she sees a man, she makes eyes at him; and young Sir Wilmot Crawley of Queen's Crawley, and Anthony Henley of Alresford, were at swords drawn about her, at the Winchester Assembly, a month ago."

That night Mr. Harry's sleep was by no means so pleasant or sweet as it had been on the first two evenings after his arrival at Walcote. "So, the bright eyes have been already shining on another," thought he, "and the pretty lips, or the cheeks at any rate, have begun the work which they were made for. Here's a girl not sixteen, and one young gentleman is already whimpering over a lock of her hair, and two country squires are ready to cut each other's throats that they may have the honour of a dance with her. What a fool am I to be dallying about this passion, and fingeing my wings in this foolish flame. Wings!—why not

say crutches? There is but eight years difference between us, to be sure; but in life I am thirty years older. How could I ever hope to please such a sweet creature as that, with my rough ways and glum face? Say that I have merit ever so much, and won myself a name, could she ever listen to me? She must be my Lady Marchioness, and I remain a nameless bastard. Oh! my master, my master! (here he fell to thinking with a passionate grief of the vow which he had made to his poor dying lord); Oh! my mistress, dearest and kindest, will you be contented with the sacrifice which the poor orphan makes for you, whom you love, and who so loves you?"

And then came a fiercer pang of temptation. "A word from me," Harry thought, "a syllable of explanation, and all this might be changed; but no, I swore it over the dying bed of my benefactor. For the sake of him and his; for the sacred love and kindness of old days; I gave my promise to him, and may kind Heaven enable me to keep my vow!"

The next day, although Esmond gave no sign of what was going on in his mind, but strove to

be more than ordinarily gay and cheerful when he met his friends at the morning meal, his dear mistress, whose clear eyes it seemed no emotion of his could escape, perceived that something troubled him, for she looked anxiously towards him more than once during the breakfast, and when he went up to his chamber afterwards she presently followed him, and knocked at his door.

As she entered, no doubt the whole story was clear to her at once, for she found our young gentleman packing his valise, pursuant to the resolution which he had come to over-night of making a brisk retreat out of this temptation.

She closed the door very carefully behind her, and then leant against it, very pale, her hands folded before her, looking at the young man, who was kneeling over his work of packing. "Are you going so soon?" she said.

He rose up from his knees, blushing, perhaps, to be so discovered, in the very act, as it were, and took one of her fair little hands—it was that which had her marriage ring on—and kissed it.

"It is best that it should be so, dearest lady," he said.

"I knew you were going, at breakfast.

I—I thought you might stay. What has happened? Why can't you remain longer with us? What has Frank told you—you were talking together late last night?"

"I had but three days leave from Chelsea," Esmond said, as gaily as he could. "My aunt—she lets me call her aunt—is my mistress now; I owe her my lieutenantcy and my laced coat. She has taken me into high favour; and my new general is to dine at Chelsea to-morrow—General Lumley, madam—who has appointed me his aide-de-camp, and on whom I must have the honour of waiting. See, here is a letter from the dowager; the post brought it last night; and I would not speak of it, for fear of disturbing our last merry meeting."

My lady glanced at the letter, and put it down with a smile that was somewhat contemptuous. "I have no need to read the letter," says she—(indeed, 'twas as well she did not; for the Chelsea missive, in the poor dowager's usual French jargon, permitted him a longer holiday than he said. '*Je vous donne,*' quoth her ladyship, '*oui jour, pour vous fatigay parfaitement de vos parens fatigans*')—"I have no need to

read the letter," says she. "What was it Frank told you last night?"

"He told me little I did not know," Mr. Esmond answered. "But I have thought of that little, and here's the result: I have no right to the name I bear, dear lady; and it is only by your sufferance that I am allowed to keep it. If I thought for an hour of what has perhaps crossed your mind too——"

"Yes, I did, Harry," said she; "I thought of it; and think of it. I would sooner call you my son, than the greatest prince in Europe—yes, than the greatest prince. For who is there so good and so brave, and who would love her as you would? But there are reasons a mother can't tell."

"I know them," said Mr. Esmond, interrupting her with a smile, "I know there's Sir Wilmot Crawley of Queen's Crawley, and Mr. Anthony Henley of the Grange, and my Lord Marquis of Blandford, that seems to be the favoured suitor. You shall ask me to wear my Lady Marchioness's favours and to dance at her ladyship's wedding."

"O! Harry, Harry, it is none of these follies

that frighten me," cried out Lady Castlewood. "Lord Churchill is but a child, his outbreak about Beatrix was a mere boyish folly. His parents would rather see him buried than married to one below him in rank. And do you think that I would stoop to sue for a husband for Francis Esmond's daughter; or submit to have my girl smuggled into that proud family to cause a quarrel between son and parents, and to be treated only as an inferior? I would disdain such a meanness. Beatrix would scorn it. Ah! Henry, 'tis not with you the fault lies, 'tis with her. I know you both, and love you; need I be ashamed of that love now? No, never, never, and 'tis not you, dear Harry, that is unworthy. 'Tis for my poor Beatrix I tremble,—whose headstrong will frightens me; whose jealous temper (they say I was jealous too, but, pray God, I am cured of that sin) and whose vanity no words or prayers of mine can cure—only suffering, only experience, and remorse afterwards. Oh! Henry, she will make no man happy who loves her. Go away, my son: leave her: love us always, and think kindly of us: and for me, my dear, you know these walls contain all that I love in the world."

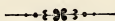
In after life, did Esmond find the words true which his fond mistress spoke from her sad heart ? Warning he had : but I doubt others had warning before his time, and since : and he benefited by it as most men do.

My young Lord Viscount was exceeding sorry when he heard that Harry could not come to the cock-match with him, and must go to London, but no doubt my lord consoled himself when the Hampshire cocks won the match ; and he saw every one of the battles, and crowed properly over the conquered Suffex gentlemen.

As Esmond rode towards town his servant coming up to him informed him with a grin, that Mistress Beatrix had brought out a new gown, and blue stockings for that day's dinner, in which she intended to appear, and had flown into a rage and given her maid a slap on the face soon after she heard he was going away. Mistress Beatrix's woman, the fellow said, came down to the servants' hall, crying, and with the mark of a blow still on her cheek : but Esmond peremptorily ordered him to fall back and be silent, and rode on with thoughts enough of his own to occupy him—some sad ones, some inexpressibly dear and pleasant.

His mistress, from whom he had been a year separated, was his dearest mistress again. The family from which he had been parted, and which he loved with the fondest devotion, was his family once more. If Beatrix's beauty shone upon him, it was with a friendly lustre, and he could regard it with much such a delight as he brought away after seeing the beautiful pictures of the smiling Madonnas in the convent at Cadiz, when he was dispatched thither with a flag: and as for his mistress, 'twas difficult to say with what a feeling he regarded her. 'Twas happiness to have seen her: 'twas no great pang to part; a filial tenderness, a love that was at once respect and protection, filled his mind as he thought of her; and near her or far from her, and from that day until now, and from now till death is past, and beyond it, he prays that sacred flame may ever burn.

CHAPTER IX.



I MAKE THE CAMPAIGN OF 1704.

MR. ESMOND rode up to London then, where, if the dowager had been angry at the abrupt leave of absence he took, she was mightily pleased at his speedy return.

He went immediately and paid his court to his new general, General Lumley, who received him graciously, having known his father, and also, he was pleased to say, having had the very best accounts of Mr. Esmond from the officer whose aide-de-camp he had been at Vigo. During this winter Mr. Esmond was gazetted to a lieutenancy in Brigadier Webb's regiment of Fusileers, then with their colonel in Flanders; but being now attached to the suite of Mr. Lumley, Esmond did not join his own regiment until more than a year afterwards, and after his return from the

campaign of Blenheim, which was fought the next year. The campaign began very early, our troops marching out of their quarters before the winter was almost over, and investing the city of Bonn, on the Rhine, under the Duke's command. His Grace joined the army in deep grief of mind, with crape on his sleeve, and his household in mourning; and the very same packet which brought the Commander-in-Chief over, brought letters to the forces which preceded him, and one from his dear mistress to Esmond, which interested him not a little.

The young Marquis of Blandford, his Grace's son, who had been entered in King's College in Cambridge (whither my Lord Viscount had also gone, to Trinity, with Mr. Tusher as his governor), had been seized with small-pox, and was dead at sixteen years of age, and so poor Frank's schemes for his sister's advancement were over, and that innocent childish passion nipped in the birth.

Esmond's mistress would have had him return, at least her letters hinted as much; but in the presence of the enemy this was impossible, and

our young man took his humble share in the siege, which need not be described here, and had the good luck to escape without a wound of any sort, and to drink his general's health after the surrender. He was in constant military duty this year, and did not think of asking for a leave of absence, as one or two of his less fortunate friends did, who were cast away in that tremendous storm which happened towards the close of November, that "which of late o'er pale Britannia past," (as Mr. Addison sang of it,) and in which scores of our greatest ships and 15,000 of our seamen went down.

They said that our Duke was quite heart-broken by the calamity which had befallen his family; but his enemies found that he could subdue them, as well as master his grief. Successful as had been this great General's operations in the past year, they were far enhanced by the splendour of his victory in the ensuing campaign. His Grace the Captain-General went to England after Bonn, and our army fell back into Holland, where, in April, 1704, his Grace again found the troops embarking from Harwich and landing at Maesland Sluys:

thence His Grace came immediately to the Hague, where he received the foreign ministers, general-officers, and other people of quality. The greatest honours were paid to his Grace everywhere,—at the Hague, Utrecht, Ruremonde, and Maestricht ; the civic authorities coming to meet his coaches : salvos of cannon saluting him, canopies of state being erected for him where he stopped, and feasts prepared for the numerous gentlemen following in his suite. His Grace reviewed the troops of the States-General between Liege and Maestricht, and afterwards the English forces, under the command of General Churchill, near Bois-le-Duc. Every preparation was made for a long march ; and the army heard, with no small elation, that it was the Commander-in-Chief's intention to carry the war out of the Low Countries, and to march on the Mozelle. Before leaving our camp at Maestricht, we heard that the French, under the Marshal Villeroy, were also bound towards the Mozelle.

Towards the end of May, the army reached Coblentz ; and next day, his Grace, and the generals accompanying him, went to visit the

Electoꝛ of Treves at his Castle of Ehrenbreitstein, the Horse and Dragoons passing the Rhine whilst the Duke was entertained at a grand feast by the Electoꝛ. All as yet was novelty, festivity, and splendour,—a brilliant march of a great and glorious army through a friendly country, and sure through some of the most beautiful scenes of nature which I ever witnessed.

The Foot and Artillery, following after the Horse as quick as possible, crossed the Rhine under Ehrenbreitstein, and so to Castel, over against Mayntz, in which city his Grace, his generals, and his retinue were received at the landing-place by the Electoꝛ's coaches, carried to his Highness's palace amidst the thunder of cannon, and then once more magnificently entertained. Gidlingen, in Bavaria, was appointed as the general rendezvous of the army, and thither, by different routes, the whole forces of English, Dutch, Danes, and German auxiliaries took their way. The Foot and Artillery under General Churchill passed the Neckar, at Heidelberg; and Esmond had an opportunity of seeing that city and palace, once so famous and beautiful (though shattered and battered by

the French, under Turenne, in the late war), where his grandfire had served the beautiful and unfortunate Electress-Palatine, the first King Charles's sister.

At Mindelsheim, the famous Prince of Savoy came to visit our commander, all of us crowding eagerly to get a sight of that brilliant and intrepid warrior; and our troops were drawn up in battalia before the Prince, who was pleased to express his admiration of this noble English army. At length we came in sight of the enemy between Dillingen and Lawingen, the Brentz lying between the two armies. The Elector, judging that Donauwort would be the point of his Grace's attack, sent a strong detachment of his best troops to Count Darcos, who was posted at Schellenberg, near that place, where great intrenchments were thrown up, and thousands of pioneers employed to strengthen the position.

On the 2nd of July, his Grace stormed the post, with what success on our part need scarce be told. His Grace advanced with six thousand Foot, English and Dutch, thirty squadrons, and three regiments of Imperial Cuirassiers, the Duke

crossing the river at the head of the Cavalry. Although our troops made the attack with unparalleled courage and fury,—rushing up to the very guns of the enemy, and being slaughtered before their works,—we were driven back many times, and should not have carried them, but that the Imperialists came up under the Prince of Baden, when the enemy could make no head against us: we pursued him into the trenches, making a terrible slaughter there, and into the very Danube, where a great part of his troops, following the example of their generals, Count Darcos and the Elector himself, tried to save themselves by swimming. Our army entered Donauwort, which the Bavarians evacuated; and where 'twas said the Elector purposed to have given us a warm reception, by burning us in our beds; the cellars of the houses, when we took possession of them, being found stuffed with straw. But though the links were there, the link-boys had run away. The townsmen saved their houses, and our General took possession of the enemy's ammunition in the arsenals, his stores, and magazines. Five days afterwards a great “Te Deum” was sung in Prince Lewis's

army, and a solemn day of thanksgiving held in our own; the Prince of Savoy's compliments coming to his Grace the Captain-General during the day's religious ceremony, and concluding, as it were, with an amen.

And now, having seen a great military march through a friendly country; the pomps and festivities of more than one German court; the severe struggle of a hotly-contested battle, and the triumph of victory; Mr. Esmond beheld another part of military duty; our troops entering the enemy's territory, and putting all around them to fire and sword; burning farms, wasted fields, shrieking women, slaughtered sons and fathers, and drunken soldiery, cursing and carousing in the midst of tears, terror, and murder. Why does the stately Muse of history, that delights in describing the valour of heroes and the grandeur of conquest, leave out these scenes, so brutal, mean, and degrading, that yet form by far the greater part of the drama of war? You, gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease, and compliment yourselves in the songs of triumph with which our chieftains are bepraised,—you pretty maidens, that come

tumbling down the stairs when the fife and drum call you, and huzzah for the British Grenadiers,—do you take account that these items go to make up the amount of the triumph you admire, and form part of the duties of the heroes you fondle? Our chief, whom England and all Europe, saving only the Frenchmen, worshipped almost, had this of the god-like in him, that he was impassible before victory, before danger, before defeat. Before the greatest obstacle or the most trivial ceremony; before a hundred thousand men drawn in battalia, or a peasant slaughtered at the door of his burning hovel; before a carouse of drunken German lords, or a monarch's court, or a cottage-table, where his plans were laid, or an enemy's battery, vomiting flame and death, and strewing corpses round about him;—he was always cold, calm, resolute, like fate. He performed a treason or a court-bow; he told a falsehood as black as Styx, as easily as he paid a compliment or spoke about the weather. He took a mistress, and left her; he betrayed his benefactor, and supported him, or would have murdered him, with the same calmness always, and having no more

remorse than Clotho, when she weaves the thread, or Lachesis, when she cuts it. In the hour of battle I have heard the Prince of Savoy's officers say, the Prince became possessed with a sort of warlike fury ; his eyes lighted up ; he rushed hither and thither, raging ; he shrieked curses and encouragement, yelling and harking his bloody war-dogs on, and himself always at the first of the hunt. Our Duke was as calm at the mouth of the cannon, as at the door of a drawing-room. Perhaps he could not have been the great man he was, had he had a heart either for love or hatred, or pity or fear, or regret or remorse. He achieved the highest deed of daring, or deepest calculation of thought, as he performed the very meanest action of which a man is capable ; told a lie, or cheated a fond woman, or robbed a poor beggar of a half-penny with a like awful serenity and equal capacity of the highest and lowest acts of our nature.

His qualities were pretty well known in the army, where there were parties of all politicks, and of plenty of shrewdness and wit ; but there existed such a perfect confidence in him, as the first captain of the world, and such a faith and

admiration in his prodigious genius and fortune, that the very men whom he notoriously cheated of their pay, the chiefs whom he used and injured—(for he used all men, great and small, that came near him, as his instruments alike, and took something of theirs, either some quality or some property,—the blood of a soldier, it might be, or a jewelled hat, or a hundred thousand crowns from a king, or a portion out of a starving sentinel's three farthings; or (when he was young) a kiss from a woman, and the gold chain off her neck, taking all he could from woman or man, and having, as I have said, this of the god-like in him, that he could see a hero perish or a sparrow fall, with the same amount of sympathy for either. Not that he had no tears; he could always order up this reserve at the proper moment to battle; he could draw upon tears or smiles alike, and whenever need was for using this cheap coin. He would cringe to a shoeblack, as he would flatter a minister or a monarch; be haughty, be humble, threaten, repent, weep, grasp your hand or stab you whenever he saw occasion)—But yet those of the army, who knew him best and had suffered most

from him, admired him most of all: and as he rode along the lines to battle or galloped up in the nick of time to a battalion reeling from before the enemy's charge or shot, the fainting men and officers got new courage as they saw the splendid calm of his face, and felt that his will made them irresistible.

After the great victory of Blenheim the enthusiasm of the army for the Duke, even of his bitterest personal enemies in it, amounted to a sort of rage—nay, the very officers who cursed him in their hearts, were among the most frantick to cheer him. Who could refuse his meed of admiration to such a victory and such a victor? Not he who writes: a man may profess to be ever so much a philosopher; but he who fought on that day must feel a thrill of pride as he recalls it.

The French right was posted near to the village of Blenheim, on the Danube, where the Marshal Tallard's quarters were; their line extending through, it may be, a league and a half, before Lutzingen and up to a woody hill, round the base of which, and acting against the Prince of Savoy, were forty of his squadrons.

Here was a village that the Frenchmen had burned, the wood being, in fact, a better shelter and easier of guard than any village.

Before these two villages and the French lines ran a little stream, not more than two foot broad, through a marsh (that was mostly dried up from the heats of the weather), and this stream was the only separation between the two armies—ours coming up and ranging themselves in line of battle before the French, at six o'clock in the morning; so that our line was quite visible to theirs; and the whole of this great plain was black and swarming with troops for hours before the cannonading began.

On one side and the other this cannonading lasted many hours. The French guns being in position in front of their line, and doing severe damage among our Horse especially, and on our right wing of Imperialists under the Prince of Savoy, who could neither advance his artillery nor his lines, the ground before him being cut up by ditches, morasses, and very difficult of passage for the guns.

It was past mid-day when the attack began on our left, where Lord Cutts commanded, the

bravest and most beloved officer in the English army. And now, as if to make his experience in war complete, our young aide-de-camp having seen two great armies facing each other in line of battle, and had the honour of riding with orders from one end to other of the line, came in for a not uncommon accompaniment of military glory, and was knocked on the head, along with many hundred of brave fellows, almost at the very commencement of this famous day of Blenheim. A little after noon, the disposition for attack being completed with much delay and difficulty, and under a severe fire from the enemy's guns, that were better posted and more numerous than ours, a body of English and Hessians, with Major-General Wilkes commanding at the extreme left of our line, marched upon Blenheim, advancing with great gallantry, the Major-General on foot, with his officers, at the head of the column, and marching, with his hat off, intrepidly in the face of the enemy, who was pouring in a tremendous fire from his guns and musketry, to which our people were instructed not to reply, except with pike and bayonet when they reached the French palisades.

To these Wilkes walked intrepidly, and struck the wood-work with his sword, before our people charged it. He was shot down at the instant with his colonel, major, and several officers; and our troops cheering and huzzaing, and coming on, as they did, with immense resolution and gallantry, were nevertheless stopped by the murderous fire from behind the enemy's defences, and then attacked in flank by a furious charge of French horse which swept out of Blenheim, and cut down our men in great numbers. Three fierce and desperate assaults of our Foot were made and repulsed by the enemy; so that our columns of Foot were quite shattered, and fell back, scrambling over the little rivulet, which we had crossed so resolutely an hour before, and pursued by the French cavalry, slaughtering us and cutting us down.

And now the conquerors were met by a furious charge of English horse under Esmond's general, General Lumley, behind whose squadrons the flying Foot found refuge, and formed again, whilst Lumley drove back the French horse, charging up to the village of Blenheim and the palisades where Wilkes and many hundred more

gallant Englishmen lay in slaughtered heaps. Beyond this moment, and of this famous victory, Mr. Esmond knows nothing ; for a shot brought down his horse and our young gentleman on it, who fell crushed and stunned under the animal ; and came to his senses he knows not how long after, only to lose them again from pain and loss of blood. A dim sense, as of people groaning round about him, a wild incoherent thought or two for her who occupied so much of his heart now, and that here his career, and his hopes, and misfortunes were ended, he remembers in the course of these hours. When he woke up it was with a pang of extreme pain, his breastplate was taken off, his servant was holding his head up, the good and faithful lad of Hampshire* was blubbering over his master, whom he found and had thought dead, and a surgeon was probing a wound in the shoulder, which he must have got at the same moment when his horse was shot and fell over him. The battle was over at this end of the field, by this time : the village was in

* My mistress before I went this campaign sent me John Lockwood out of Walcote, who hath ever since remained with me.—H. E.

possession of the English, its brave defenders prisoners, or fled, or drowned, many of them, in the neighbouring waters of Donau. But for honest Lockwood's faithful search after his master there had no doubt been an end of Esmond here, and of this his story. The marauders were out rifling the bodies as they lay on the field, and Jack had brained one of these gentry with the club-end of his musket, who had eased Esmond of his hat and periwig, his purse, and fine silver-mounted pistols, which the dowager gave him, and was fumbling in his pockets for further treasure, when Jack Lockwood came up and put an end to the scoundrel's triumph.

Hospitals for our wounded were established at Blenheim, and here for several weeks Esmond lay in very great danger of his life; the wound was not very great from which he suffered, and the ball extracted by the surgeon on the spot where our young gentleman received it; but a fever set in next day, as he was lying in hospital, and that almost carried him away. Jack Lockwood said he talked in the wildest manner during his delirium; that he called himself the Marquis of Esmond, and seizing one of the surgeon's

assistants who came to dress his wounds, swore that he was Madam Beatrix, and that he would make her a duchess if she would but say yes. He was passing the days in these crazy fancies, and *vana somnia*, whilst the army was singing Te Deum for the victory, and those famous festivities were taking place at which our Duke, now made a Prince of the Empire, was entertained by the King of the Romans and his nobility. His Grace went home by Berlin and Hanover, and Esmond lost the festivities which took place at those cities, and which his general shared in company of the other general officers who travelled with our great captain. When he could move it was by the Duke of Wirtemberg's city of Stuttgart that he made his way homewards, revisiting Heidelberg again, whence he went to Mannheim, and hence had a tedious but easy water journey down the river of Rhine, which he had thought a delightful and beautiful voyage indeed, but that his heart was longing for home, and something far more beautiful and delightful.

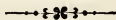
As bright and welcome as the eyes almost of his mistress shone the lights of Harwich,

as the packet came in from Holland. It was not many hours ere he, Esmond, was in London, of that you may be sure, and received with open arms by the old dowager of Chelsea, who vowed, in her jargon of French and English, that he had the *air noble*, that his pallor embellished him, that he was an Amadis and deserved a Gloriana, and, oh! flames and darts! what was his joy at hearing that his mistress was come into waiting, and was now with her Majesty at Kensington! Although Mr. Esmond had told Jack Lockwood to get horses and they would ride for Winchester that night; when he heard this news he countermanded the horses at once; his business lay no longer in Hants; all his hope and desire lay within a couple of miles of him in Kensington Park wall. Poor Harry had never looked in the glass before so eagerly to see whether he had the *bel air*, and his paleness really did become him: he never took such pains about the curl of his periwig, and the taste of his embroidery and point-lace, as now, before Mr. Amadis presented himself to Madam Gloriana. Was the fire of the French lines half so murderous as the killing glances from her

ladyship's eyes? Oh! darts and raptures, how beautiful were they!

And as, before the blazing sun of morning, the moon fades away in the sky almost invisible;—Esmond thought, with a blush perhaps, of another sweet pale face, sad and faint, and fading out of sight, with its sweet fond gaze of affection; such a last look it seemed to cast as Eurydice might have given, yearning after her lover, when fate and Pluto summoned her, and she passed away into the shades.

CHAPTER X.



AN OLD STORY ABOUT A FOOL AND A WOMAN.

ANY taste for pleasure which Esmond had (and he liked to *desipere in loco*, neither more nor less than most young men of his age) he could now gratify, to the utmost extent, and in the best company which the town afforded. When the army went into winter quarters abroad, those of the officers who had interest or money, easily got leave of absence, and found it much pleasanter to spend their time in Pall-Mall and Hyde Park, than to pass the winter away behind the fortifications of the dreary old Flanders towns, where the English troops were gathered. Yatches and packets passed daily between the Dutch and Flemish ports and Harwich; the roads thence to London and the great inns were crowded with army gentlemen; the taverns and

ordinaries of the town swarmed with red-coats ; and our great Duke's levees at St. James's were as thronged as they had been at Ghent and Bruffels, where we treated him and he us, with the grandeur and ceremony of a fovereign. Though Esmond had been appointed to a lieutenancy in the Fusileer regiment, of which that celebrated officer, Brigadier John Richmond Webb, was colonel, he had never joined the regiment, nor been introduced to its excellent commander, though they had made the same campaign together, and been engaged in the same battle. But being aide-de-camp to General Lumley, who commanded the division of Horse, and the army marching to its point of destination on the Danube by different routes, Esmond had not fallen in, as yet, with his commander and future comrades of the fort ; and it was in London, in Golden Square, where Major-General Webb lodged, that Captain Esmond had the honour of first paying his respects to his friend, patron, and commander of after days.

Those who remember this brilliant and accomplished gentleman may recollect his character, upon which he prided himself, I think, not a

little, of being the handsomest man in the army ; a poet who writ a dull copy of verses upon the battle of Oudenarde three years after, describing Webb, says :—

“ To noble danger Webb conducts the way,
“ His great example all his troops obey ;
“ Before the front the general sternly rides,
“ With such an air as Mars to battle strides :
“ Propitious Heaven must sure a hero save,
“ Like Paris handsome, and like Hector brave.”

Mr. Webb thought these verses quite as fine as Mr. Addison's on the Blenheim Campaign, and, indeed, to be Hector *à la mode de Paris*, was a part of this gallant gentleman's ambition. It would have been difficult to find an officer in the whole army, or amongst the splendid courtiers and cavaliers of the Maison du Roy, that fought under Vendosme and Villeroy in the army opposed to ours, who was a more accomplished foldier and perfect gentleman, and either braver or better-looking. And, if Mr. Webb believed of himself what the world said of him, and was deeply convinced of his own indisputable genius, beauty, and valour, who has a right to quarrel with him very much ? This self-content of his

kept him in general good-humour, of which his friends and dependants got the benefit.

He came of a very ancient Wiltshire family, which he respected above all families in the world; he could prove a lineal descent from King Edward the First, and his first ancestor, Roaldus de Richmond, rode by William the Conqueror's side on Hastings field. "We were gentlemen, Esmond," he used to say, "when the Churchills were horse-boys." He was a very tall man, standing in his pumps six feet three inches (in his great jack-boots, with his tall, fair periwig, and hat and feather, he could not have been less than eight feet high). "I am taller than Churchill," he would say, surveying himself in the glass, "and I am a better made man; and if the women won't like a man that hasn't a wart on his nose, faith, I can't help myself, and Churchill has the better of me there." Indeed, he was always measuring himself with the Duke, and always asking his friends to measure them. And talking in this frank way, as he would do, over his cups, wags would laugh and encourage him; friends would be sorry for him; schemers and flatterers would egg him

on, and tale-bearers carry the stories to headquarters, and widen the difference which already existed there between the great captain and one of the ablest and bravest lieutenants he ever had.

His rancour against the Duke was so apparent, that one saw it in the first half-hour's conversation with General Webb; and his lady, who adored her General, and thought him a hundred times taller, handsomer, and braver than a prodigal nature had made him, hated the great Duke with such an intensity as it becomes faithful wives to feel against their husbands' enemies. Not that my Lord Duke was so yet; Mr. Webb had said a thousand things against him, which his superior had pardoned; and his Grace, whose spies were everywhere, had heard a thousand things more that Webb had never said. But it cost this great man no pains to pardon; and he passed over an injury or a benefit alike easily.

Should any child of mine take the pains to read these, his ancestor's memoirs, I would not have him judge of the great Duke* by what

* This passage in the Memoirs of Esmond is written on a leaf inserted into the MS. book and dated 1744, probably after he had heard of the Duchess's death.

a cotemporary has written of him. No man hath been so immensely lauded and decried, as this great statesman and warrior; as, indeed, no man ever deserved better the very greatest praise and the strongest censure. If the present writer joins with the latter faction, very likely a private pique of his own may be the cause of his ill-feeling.

On presenting himself at the Commander-in-Chief's levee, his Grace had not the least remembrance of General Lumley's aide-de-camp, and though he knew Esmond's family perfectly well, having served with both lords (my Lord Francis and the Viscount, Esmond's father) in Flanders, and in the Duke of York's Guard, the Duke of Marlborough, who was friendly and serviceable to the (so-styled) legitimate representatives of the Viscount Castlewood, took no sort of notice of the poor lieutenant, who bore their name. A word of kindness or acknowledgment, or a single glance of approbation, might have changed Esmond's opinion of the great man; and instead of a satire, which his pen cannot help writing, who knows but that the humble historian might have taken the other side of panegyric? We have but to change the point of view, and the

greatest action looks mean; as we turn the perspective-glass, and a giant appears a pigmy. You may describe, but who can tell whether your fight is clear or not, or your means of information accurate? Had the great man said but a word of kindness to the small one (as he would have stepped out of his gilt chariot to shake hands with Lazarus in rags and sores, if he thought Lazarus could have been of any service to him), no doubt Esmond would have fought for him with pen and sword to the utmost of his might; but my lord the lion did not want master mouse at this moment, and so Muscipulus went off and nibbled in opposition.

So it was, however, that a young gentleman, who, in the eyes of his family, and in his own, doubtless, was looked upon as a consummate hero, found that the great hero of the day took no more notice of him than of the smallest drummer in his Grace's army. The dowager at Chelsea was furious against this neglect of her family, and had a great battle with Lady Marlborough (as Lady Castlewood insisted on calling the Duchess). Her Grace was now Mistress of the Robes to her Majesty, and one

of the greateft perfonages in this kingdom, as her husband was in all Europe, and the battle between the two ladies took place in the Queen's drawing-room.

The Duchefs, in reply to my aunt's eager clamour, faid haughtily, that ſhe had done her beſt for the legitimate branch of the Efmonds, and could not be expected to provide for the baſtard brats of the family.

“Baſtards,” ſays the Viſcounteſs, in a fury, “there are baſtards amongſt the Churchills, as your Grace knows, and the Duke of Berwick is provided for well enough.”

“Madam,” ſays the Duchefs, “you know whoſe fault it is that there are no ſuch dukes in the Efmond family too, and how that little ſcheme of a certain lady miſcarried.”

Efmond's friend, Dick Steele, who was in waiting on the Prince, heard the controverſy between the ladies at court, “And faith,” ſays Dick, “I think, Harry, thy kinſwoman had the worſt of it.”

He could not keep the ſtory quiet; 'twas all over the coffee-houſes ere night; it was printed in a News Letter before a month was over, and

“The Reply of her Grace the Duchefs of M-rlb-r-gh to a Popish Lady of the Court once a favourite of the late K— J-m-s” was printed in half a dozen places, with a note ftating that “this duchefs, when the head of this lady’s family came by his death lately in a fatal duel, never refted until fhe got a penfion for the orphan heir, and widow, from her Majefty’s bounty.” The fquabble did not advance poor Esmond’s promotion much, and indeed made him fo afhamed of himfelf that he dared not fhow his face at the Commander-in-Chief’s levees again.

During thofe eighteen months which had paffed fince Esmond faw his dear miftrefs, her good father, the old Dean, quitted this life, firm in his principles to the very laft, and enjoining his family always to remember that the Queen’s brother, King James the Third, was their rightful fovereign. He made a very edifying end, as his daughter told Esmond, and, not a little to her furprife, after his death (for he had lived always very poorly) my lady found that her father had left no lefs a fum than £3000 behind him, which he bequeathed to her.

With this little fortune Lady Castlewood was enabled, when her daughter's turn at Court came, to come to London, where she took a small genteel house at Kensington in the neighbourhood of the Court, bringing her children with her, and here it was that Esmond found his friends.

As for the young lord, his university career had ended rather abruptly. Honest Tusser, his governor, had found my young gentleman quite ungovernable. My lord worried his life away with tricks; and broke out, as home-bred lads will, into a hundred youthful extravagancies, so that Dr. Bentley, the new master of Trinity, thought fit to write to the Viscountess Castlewood, my lord's mother, and beg her to remove the young nobleman from a college where he declined to learn, and where he only did harm by his riotous example. Indeed, I believe he nearly set fire to Nevil's Court, that beautiful new quadrangle of our college, which Sir Christopher Wren had lately built. He knocked down a proctor's man that wanted to arrest him in a midnight prank; he gave a dinner party on the Prince of Wales's birthday, which was within a fortnight of his own, and the twenty young

gentlemen then present sallied out after their wine, having toasted King James's health with open windows, and sung cavalier songs, and shouted "God save the King!" in the great court, so that the master came out of his lodge at midnight, and dissipated the riotous assembly.

This was my lord's crowning freak, and the Rev. Thomas Tusser, domestick chaplain to the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Castlewood, finding his prayers and sermons of no earthly avail to his lordship, gave up his duties of governor; went and married his brewer's widow at Southampton, and took her and her money to his parsonage-house at Castlewood.

My lady could not be angry with her son for drinking King James's health, being herself a loyal Tory, as all the Castlewood family were, and acquiesced with a sigh, knowing, perhaps, that her refusal would be of no avail to the young lord's desire for a military life. She would have liked him to be in Mr. Esmond's regiment, hoping that Harry might act as guardian and adviser to his wayward young kinsman; but my young lord would hear of

nothing but the Guards, and a commission was got for him in the Duke of Ormond's regiment ; so Esmond found my lord, ensign and lieutenant when he returned from Germany after the Blenheim campaign.

The effect produced by both Lady Castlewood's children when they appeared in publick was extraordinary, and the whole town speedily rang with their fame ; such a beautiful couple it was declared, never had been seen ; the young maid of honour was toasted at every table and tavern, and as for my young lord, his good looks were even more admired than his sister's. A hundred songs were written about the pair, and as the fashion of that day was, my young lord was praised in these Anacreonticks as warmly as Bathyllus. You may be sure that he accepted very complacently the town's opinion of him, and acquiesced with that frankness and charming good-humour he always showed in the idea that he was the prettiest fellow in all London.

The old dowager at Chelsea, though she could never be got to acknowledge that Mistress Beatrix was any beauty at all (in which opinion, as it may be imagined, a vast number of the ladies

agreed with her), yet, on the very first sight of young Castlewood, she owned she fell in love with him; and Henry Esmond, on his return to Chelsea, found himself quite superseded in her favour by her younger kinsman. That feat of drinking the King's health at Cambridge would have won her heart, she said, if nothing else did. "How had the dear young fellow got such beauty?" she asked. "Not from his father—certainly not from his mother. How had he come by such noble manners, and the perfect *bel air*? That countrified Walcote widow could never have taught him." Esmond had his own opinion about the countrified Walcote widow, who had a quiet grace, and serene kindness, that had always seemed to him the perfection of good breeding, though he did not try to argue this point with his aunt. But he could agree in most of the praises which the enraptured old dowager bestowed on my Lord Viscount, than whom he never beheld a more fascinating and charming gentleman. Castlewood had not wit so much as enjoyment. "The lad looks good things," Mr. Steele used to say; "and his laugh lights up a conversation as much as ten repartees from

Mr. Congreve. I would as soon sit over a bottle with him as with Mr. Addison; and rather listen to his talk than hear Nicolini. Was ever man so gracefully drunk as my Lord Castlewood? I would give anything to carry my wine (though, indeed, Dick bore his very kindly, and plenty of it, too) like this incomparable young man. When he is sober he is delightful; and when tipsy, perfectly irresistible." And referring to his favourite, Shakspeare, (who was quite out of fashion until Steele brought him back into the mode,) Dick compared Lord Castlewood to Prince Hal, and was pleased to dub Esmond as ancient Pistol.

The Mistress of the Robes, the greatest lady in England after the Queen, or even before her Majesty, as the world said, though she never could be got to say a civil word to Beatrix, whom she had promoted to her place of maid of honour, took her brother into instant favour. When young Castlewood, in his new uniform, and looking like a prince out of a fairy-tale, went to pay his duty to her Grace, she looked at him for a minute in silence, the young man blushing and in confusion before her, then

fairly burst out a-crying, and kissed him before her daughters and company. "He was my boy's friend," she said, through her sobs. "My Blandford might have been like him." And everybody saw, after this mark of the Duchess's favour, that my young lord's promotion was secure, and people crowded round the favourite's favourite, who became vainer and gayer, and more good-humoured than ever.

Meanwhile Madam Beatrix was making her conquests on her own side, and amongst them was one poor gentleman, who had been shot by her young eyes two years before, and had never been quite cured of that wound; he knew, to be sure, how hopeless any passion might be, directed in that quarter, and had taken that best, though ignoble, *remedium amoris*, a speedy retreat from before the charmer, and a long absence from her; and not being dangerously smitten in the first instance, Esmond pretty soon got the better of his complaint, and if he had it still, did not know he had it, and bore it easily. But when he returned after Blenheim, the young lady of sixteen, who had appeared the most beautiful object his eyes had ever looked on two years

back, was now advanced to a perfect ripeness and perfection of beauty such as instantly enthralled the poor devil, who had already been a fugitive from her charms. Then he had seen her but for two days, and fled; now he beheld her day after day, and when she was at court, watched after her; when she was at home, made one of the family party; when she went abroad, rode after her mother's chariot; when she appeared in publick places was in the box near her, or in the pit looking at her; when she went to church was sure to be there, though he might not listen to the sermon, and be ready to hand her to her chair if she deigned to accept of his services, and select him from a score of young men who were always hanging round about her. When she went away, accompanying her Majesty to Hampton Court, a darkness fell over London; Gods, what nights has Esmond passed, thinking of her, rhyming about her, talking about her! His friend Dick Steele was at this time courting the young lady, Mrs. Scurlock, whom he married; she had a lodging in Kensington Square, hard by my Lady Castlemore's house there. Dick and Harry

being on the same errand used to meet constantly at Kensington. They were always prowling about that place, or dismally walking thence, or eagerly running thither. They emptied scores of bottles, at the King's Arms, each man prating of his love, and allowing the other to talk on condition that he might have his own turn as a listener. Hence arose an intimacy between them, though to all the rest of their friends they must have been insufferable. Esmond's verses to "Gloriana at the Harpsichord," to "Gloriana's Noddy," to "Gloriana at Court," appeared this year in the "Observer."—Have you never read them? They were thought pretty poems, and attributed by some to Mr. Prior.

This passion did not escape—how should it?—the clear eyes of Esmond's mistress: he told her all; what will a man not do when frantick with love? To what baseness will he not demean himself? What pangs will he not make others suffer, so that he may ease his selfish heart of a part of its own pain? Day after day he would seek his dear mistress, pour insane hopes, supplications, rhapsodies, raptures, into her ear. She listened, smiled, consoled, with

untiring pity and sweetness. Esmond was the eldest of her children, so she was pleased to say ; and as for her kindness, who ever had or would look for aught else from one who was an angel of goodness and pity ? After what has been said, 'tis needless almost to add that poor Esmond's suit was unsuccessful. What was a nameless, penniless lieutenant to do, when some of the greatest in the land were in the field ? Esmond never so much as thought of asking permission to hope so far above his reach as he knew this prize was—and passed his foolish, useless life in mere abject sighs and impotent longing. What nights of rage, what days of torment, of passionate unfulfilled desire, of sickening jealousy, can he recal ! Beatrix thought no more of him than of the lacquey that followed her chair. His complaints did not touch her in the least ; his raptures rather fatigued her ; she cared for his verses no more than for Dan Chaucer's, who's dead these ever, so many hundred years ; she did not hate him ; she rather despised him, and just suffered him.

One day, after talking to Beatrix's mother, his dear, fond, constant mistress—for hours—for

all day along—pouring out his flame and his passion, his despair and rage, returning again and again to the theme, pacing the room, tearing up the flowers on the table, twisting and breaking into bits the wax out of the stand-dish, and performing a hundred mad freaks of passionate folly; seeing his mistress at last quite pale and tired out with sheer weariness of compassion, and watching over his fever for the hundredth time, Esmond seized up his hat, and took his leave. As he got into Kensington Square, a sense of remorse came over him for the wearisome pain he had been inflicting upon the dearest and kindest friend ever man had. He went back to the house, where the servant still stood at the open door, ran up the stairs, and found his mistress where he had left her in the embrasure of the window, looking over the fields towards Chelsea. She laughed, wiping away at the same time the tears which were in her kind eyes; he flung himself down on his knees, and buried his head in her lap. She had in her hand the stalk of one of the flowers, a pink, that he had torn to pieces. “Oh, pardon me, pardon me, my dearest and kindest,” he

said ; “ I am in hell, and you are the angel that brings me a drop of water.”

“ I am your mother, you are my son, and I love you always,” she said, folding her hands over him ; and he went away comforted and humbled in mind as he thought of that amazing and constant love and tenderness with which this sweet lady ever blessed and pursued him.

CHAPTER XI.



THE FAMOUS MR. JOSEPH ADDISON.

THE gentlemen ushers had a table at Kensington, and the Guard a very splendid dinner daily at St. James's, at either of which ordinaries Esmond was free to dine. Dick Steele liked the Guard-table better than his own at the gentleman ushers', where there was less wine and more ceremony; and Esmond had many a jolly afternoon in company of his friend, and a hundred times at least saw Dick into his chair. If there is verity in wine, according to the old adage, what an amiable-natured character Dick's must have been! In proportion as he took in wine he overflowed with kindness. His talk was not witty so much as charming. He never said a word that could anger anybody, and only became the more

benevolent the more tipsy he grew. Many of the wags derided the poor fellow in his cups, and chose him as a butt for their satire; but there was a kindness about him, and a sweet playful fancy, that seemed to Esmond far more charming than the pointed talk of the brightest wits, with their elaborate repartees and affected severities. I think Steele shone rather than sparkled. Those famous *beaux-esprits* of the coffee-houses (Mr. William Congreve, for instance, when his gout and his grandeur permitted him to come among us) would make many brilliant hits—half a dozen in a night sometimes—but, like sharpshooters, when they had fired their shot, they were obliged to retire under cover, till their pieces were loaded again, and wait till they got another chance at their enemy; whereas Dick never thought that his bottle-companion was a butt to aim at—only a friend to shake by the hand. The poor fellow had half the town in his confidence; everybody knew everything about his loves and his debts, his creditors or his mistress's obduracy. When Esmond first came on to the town honest Dick was all flames and raptures for a young lady,

a West India fortune, whom he married. In a couple of years the lady was dead, the fortune was all but spent, and the honest widower was as eager in pursuit of a new paragon of beauty as if he had never courted and married and buried the last one.

Quitting the Guard-table on one funny afternoon, when by chance Dick had a sober fit upon him, he and his friend were making their way down Germain Street, and Dick all of a sudden left his companion's arm, and ran after a gentleman, who was poring over a folio volume at the bookshop near to St. James's church. He was a fair, tall man, in a snuff-coloured suit, with a plain sword, very sober and almost shabby in appearance,—at least, when compared to Captain Steele, who loved to adorn his jolly round person with the finest of clothes, and shone in scarlet and gold lace. The Captain rushed up, then, to the student of the bookstall, took him in his arms, hugged him, and would have kissed him,—for Dick was always hugging and buffing his friends,—but the other stepped back with a flush on his pale face, seeming to decline this publick manifestation of Steele's regard.

“My dearest Joe, where hast thou hidden thyself this age?” cries the Captain, still holding both his friend’s hands; “I have been languishing for thee this fortnight.”

“A fortnight is not an age, Dick,” says the other, very good-humouredly. (He had light blue eyes, extraordinary bright, and a face perfectly regular and handsome, like a tinted statue.) “And I have been hiding myself,—where do you think?”

“What! not across the water, my dear Joe?” says Steele, with a look of great alarm: “thou knowest I have always——”

“No,” says his friend, interrupting him with a smile: “we are not come to such straits as that, Dick. I have been hiding, sir, at a place where people never think of finding you,—at my own lodgings, whither I am going to smoke a pipe now and drink a glass of sack; will your honour come?”

“Harry Esmond, come hither,” cries out Dick. “Thou hast heard me talk over and over again at my dearest Joe, my guardian-angel.”

“Indeed,” says Mr. Esmond, with a bow

“it is not from you only that I have learnt to admire Mr. Addison. We loved good poetry at Cambridge, as well as at Oxford; and I have some of yours by heart, though I have put on a red-coat ‘O, qui canoro blandius Orpheo vocale ducis carmen;’ shall I go on, sir?” says Mr. Esmond, who indeed had read and loved the charming Latin poems of Mr. Addison, as every scholar of that time knew and admired them.

“This is Captain Esmond, who was at Blenheim,” says Steele.

“Lieutenant Esmond,” says the other, with a low bow; “at Mr. Addison’s service.”

“I have heard of you,” says Mr. Addison, with a smile; as, indeed, everybody about town had heard that unlucky story about Esmond’s dowager aunt and the Ducheſs.

“We were going to the George, to take a bottle before the play,” says Steele; “wilt thou be one, Joe?”

Mr. Addison ſaid his own lodgings were hard by, where he was ſtill rich enough to give a good bottle of wine to his friends; and invited the two gentlemen to his apartment in the Hay-market, whither we accordingly went.

“I shall get credit with my landlady,” says he, with a smile, “when she sees two such fine gentlemen as you come up my stair.” And he politely made his visitors welcome to his apartment, which was indeed but a shabby one, though no grandee of the land could receive his guests with a more perfect and courtly grace than this gentleman. A frugal dinner, consisting of a slice of meat and a penny loaf, was awaiting the owner of the lodgings. “My wine is better than my meat,” says Mr. Addison; “my Lord Halifax sent me the Burgundy.” And he set a bottle and glasses before his friends, and eat his simple dinner in a very few minutes; after which the three fell to, and began to drink. “You see,” says Mr. Addison, pointing to his writing-table, whereon was a map of the action at Hochstedt, and several other gazettes and pamphlets relating to the battle, “that I, too, am busy about your affairs, captain. I am engaged as a poetical gazetteer, to say truth, and am writing a poem on the campaign.”

So Esmond, at the request of his host, told him what he knew about the famous battle, drew the river on the table, *aliquo mero*, and with

the aid of some bits of tobacco-pipe, showed the advance of the left wing, where he had been engaged.

A sheet or two of the verses lay already on the table beside our bottles and glasses, and Dick having plentifully refreshed himself from the latter, took up the pages of manuscript, writ out with scarce a blot or correction, in the author's slim, neat handwriting, and began to read therefrom with great emphasis and volubility. At pauses of the verse the enthusiastick reader stopped and fired off a great salvo of applause.

Esmond smiled at the enthusiasm of Addison's friend. "You are like the German Burghers," says he, "and the Princes on the Moselle; when our army came to a halt, they always sent a deputation to compliment the chief, and fired a salute with all their artillery from their walls."

"And drunk the great chief's health afterward, did not they?" says Captain Steele, gaily filling up a bumper;—he never was tardy at that sort of acknowledgment of a friend's merit.

"And the Duke, since you will have me act his Grace's part," says Mr. Addison, with a smile.

and something of a blush, “pledged his friends in return. Most serene Elector of Covent Garden, I drink to your Highness’s health,” and he filled himself a glass. Joseph required scarce more pressing than Dick to that sort of amusement; but the wine never seemed at all to fluster Mr. Addison’s brains; it only unloosed his tongue, whereas Captain Steele’s head and speech were quite overcome by a single bottle.

No matter what the verses were, and, to say truth, Mr. Esmond found some of them more than indifferent, Dick’s enthusiasm for his chief never faltered, and in every line from Addison’s pen, Steele found a master-stroke. By the time Dick had come to that part of the poem, wherein the bard describes as blandly as though he were recording a dance at the opera, or a harmless bout of bucolick cudgelling at a village fair, that bloody and ruthless part of our campaign, with the remembrance whereof, every soldier who bore a part in it must sicken with shame, —when we were ordered to ravage and lay waste the Elector’s country; and with fire and murder, slaughter and crime, a great part of

his dominions was overrun;—when Dick came to the lines :

“In vengeance roused the soldier fills his hand
With sword and fire, and ravages the land.
In crackling flames a thousand harvests burn,
A thousand villages to ashes turn.
To the thick woods the woolly flocks retreat,
And mixed with bellowing herds confusedly bleat.
Their trembling lords the common shade partake,
And cries of infants found in every brake.
The listening soldier fixed in sorrow stands,
Loth to obey his leader’s just commands.
The leader grieves, by generous pity swayed,
To see his just commands so well obeyed:”

by this time wine and friendship had brought poor Dick to a perfectly maudlin state, and he hiccupped out the last line with a tenderness that set one of his auditors a-laughing.

“I admire the license of you poets,” says Esmond to Mr. Addison. (Dick, after reading of the verses, was fain to go off, insisting on kissing his two dear friends before his departure, and reeling away with his periwig over his eyes.) “I admire your art : the murder of the campaign is done to military musick, like a battle at the opera, and the virgins shriek in harmony, as our victorious grenadiers march into their villages.

Do you know what a scene it was? (By this time, perhaps, the wine had warmed Mr. Esmond's head too,) what a triumph you are celebrating? what scenes of shame and horror were enacted, over which the commander's genius presided, as calm as though he didn't belong to our sphere? You talk of the 'listening foldier fixed in sorrow,' the 'leader's grief swayed by generous pity;' to my belief the leader cared no more for bleating flocks than he did for infants' cries, and many of our ruffians butchered one or the other with equal alacrity. I was ashamed of my trade when I saw those horrors perpetrated, which came under every man's eyes. You hew out of your polished verses a stately image of smiling victory; I tell you 'tis an uncouth, distorted, savage idol; hideous, bloody, and barbarous. The rites performed before it are shocking to think of. You great poets should show it as it is—ugly and horrible, not beautiful and serene. O, sir, had you made the campaign, believe me, you never would have sung it so."

During this little outbreak, Mr. Addison was listening, smoking out of his long pipe, and smiling very placidly. "What would you

have?" says he. "In our polished days, and according to the rules of art, 'tis impossible that the Muse should depict tortures or begrime her hands with the horrors of war. These are indicated rather than described; as in the Greek tragedies, that, I dare say, you have read; (and sure there can be no more elegant specimens of composition;) Agamemnon is slain, or Medea's children destroyed, away from the scene;—the chorus occupying the stage and singing of the action to pathetick musick. Something of this I attempt, my dear sir, in my humble way: 'tis a panegyrick I mean to write, and not a satire. Were I to sing as you would have me, the town would tear the poet in pieces, and burn his book by the hands of the common hangman. Do you not use tobacco? Of all the weeds grown on earth, sure the nicotian is the most soothing and salutary. We must paint our great Duke," Mr. Addison went on, "not as a man, which no doubt he is, with weaknesses like the rest of us, but as a hero. 'Tis in a triumph, not a battle, that your humble servant is riding his sleek Pegasus. We college-poets trot, you know, on very easy nags; it hath been, time out of mind,

part of the poet's profession to celebrate the actions of heroes in verse, and to sing the deeds which you men of war perform. I must follow the rules of my art, and the composition of such a strain as this must be harmonious and majestick, not familiar, or too near the vulgar truth. *Si parva licet*: if Virgil could invoke the divine Augustus, a humbler poet from the banks of the Isis may celebrate a victory and a conqueror of our own nation, in whose triumphs every Briton has a share, and whose glory and genius contributes to every citizen's individual honour. When hath there been, since our Henrys and Edwards' days, such a great feat of arms as that from which you yourself have brought away marks of distinction. If 'tis in my power to sing that song worthily, I will do so, and be thankful to my Muse. If I fail as a poet, as a Briton at least I will shew my loyalty, and fling up my cap and huzzah for the conqueror:

““ Rheni pacator et Istri
Omnis in hoc uno variis discordia cessit
Ordinibus; lætatur eques, plauditque senator,
Votaque patricio certant plebeia favori.””

“ There were as brave men on that field,”

says Mr. Esmond (who never could be made to love the Duke of Marlborough, nor to forget those stories which he used to hear in his youth regarding that great chief's selfishness and treachery), "there were men at Blenheim as good as the leader, whom neither knights or senators applauded, nor voices plebeian or patrician favoured, and who lie there forgotten, under the clods. What poet is there to sing them?"

"To sing the gallant souls of heroes sent to Hades!" says Mr. Addison, with a smile: "Would you celebrate them all? If I may venture to question anything in such an admirable work, the catalogue of the ships in Homer hath always appeared to me as somewhat wearisome; what had the poem been, supposing the writer had chronicled the names of captains, lieutenants, rank and file? One of the greatest of a great man's qualities is success; 'tis the result of all the others; 'tis a latent power in him which compels the favour of the gods, and subjugates fortune. Of all his gifts I admire that one in the great Marlborough. To be brave? every man is brave. But in being victorious, as he is, I fancy there is something divine. In presence of the

occasion, the great soul of the leader shines out, and the god is confessed. Death itself respects him, and passes by him to lay others low. War and carnage flee before him to ravage other parts of the field, as Hector from before the divine Achilles. You say he hath no pity; no more have the gods, who are above it, and super-human. The fainting battle gathers strength at his aspect; and wherever he rides, victory charges with him."

A couple of days after, when Mr. Esmond revisited his poetick friend, he found this thought, struck out in the fervour of conversation improved and shaped into those famous lines, which are in truth the noblest in the poem of the "*Campaign.*" As the two gentlemen sat engaged in talk, Mr. Addison solacing himself with his customary pipe; the little maid-servant that waited on his lodging came up, preceding a gentleman in fine laced clothes, that had evidently been figuring at Court or a great man's levee. The courtier coughed a little at the smoke of the pipe, and looked round the room curiously, which was shabby enough, as was the owner in his worn snuff-coloured suit and plain tie-wig.

“How goes on the *magnum opus*, Mr. Addison?” says the Court gentleman on looking down at the papers that were on the table.

“We were but now over it,” says Addison (the greatest courtier in the land could not have a more splendid politeness, or greater dignity of manner); “here is the plan,” says he, “on the table: *hac ibat Simois*, here ran the little river Nebel: *hic est Sigeia tellus*, here are Tallard’s quarters, at the bowl of this pipe, at the attack of which Captain Esmond was present. I have the honour to introduce him to Mr. Boyle; and Mr. Esmond was but now depicting *aliquo prælia mixta mero*, when you came in.” In truth the two gentlemen had been so engaged when the visitor arrived, and Addison in his smiling way, speaking of Mr. Webb, Colonel of Esmond’s regiment (who commanded a brigade in the action, and greatly distinguished himself there), was lamenting that he could find never a suitable rhyme for Webb, otherwise the brigadier should have had a place in the poet’s verses. “And for you, you are but a lieutenant,” says Addison, “and the Muse can’t occupy herself with any gentleman under the rank of a field-officer.”

Mr. Boyle was all impatient to hear, saying that my Lord Treasurer and my Lord Halifax were equally anxious; and Addison, blushing, began reading of his verses, and, I suspect, knew their weak parts as well as the most critical hearer. When he came to the lines describing the angel, that

“Inspired repulsed battalions to engage,
And taught the doubtful battle where to rage,”

he read with great animation, looking at Esmond, as much as to say, “You know where that simile came from—from our talk, and our bottle of Burgundy, the other day.”

The poet’s two hearers were caught with enthusiasm, and applauded the verses with all their might. The gentleman of the Court sprang up in great delight. “Not a word more, my dear sir,” says he. “Trust me with the papers—I’ll defend them with my life. Let me read them over to my Lord Treasurer, whom I am appointed to see in half an hour. I venture to promise, the verses shall lose nothing by my reading, and then, sir, we shall see whether Lord Halifax has a right to complain that his friend’s pension is no longer paid.” And without more

ado, the courtier in lace seized the manuscript pages, placed them in his breast with his ruffled hand over his heart, executed a most gracious wave of the hat with the disengaged hand, and smiled and bowed out of the room, leaving an odour of pomander behind him.

“Does not the chamber look quite dark?” says Addison, surveying it, “after the glorious appearance and disappearance of that gracious messenger? Why, he illuminated the whole room. Your scarlet, Mr. Esmond, will bear any light; but this thread-bare old coat of mine, how very worn it looked under the glare of that splendour! I wonder whether they will do anything for me,” he continued. “When I came out of Oxford into the world, my patrons promised me great things; and you see where their promises have landed me, in a lodging up two pair of stairs, with a fixpenny dinner from the cook’s shop. Well, I suppose this promise will go after the others, and fortune will jilt me, as the jade has been doing any time these seven years. ‘I puff the prostitute away,’” says he, smiling, and blowing a cloud out of his pipe. “There is no hardship in poverty, Esmond, that

is not bearable; no hardship even in honest dependence that an honest man may not put up with. I came out of the lap of Alma-Mater, puffed up with her praises of me, and thinking to make a figure in the world with the parts and learning which had got me no small name in our college. The world is the ocean, and Isis and Charwell are but little drops, of which the sea takes no account. My reputation ended a mile beyond Maudlin Tower; no one took note of me; and I learned this, at least, to bear up against evil fortune with a cheerful heart. Friend Dick hath made a figure in the world, and has passed me in the race long ago. What matters a little name or a little fortune? There is no fortune that a philosopher cannot endure. I have been not unknown as a scholar, and yet forced to live by turning bear-leader, and teaching a boy to spell. What then? The life was not pleasant, but possible—the bear was bearable. Should this venture fail, I will go back to Oxford; and some day, when you are a general, you shall find me a curate in a cassock and bands, and I shall welcome your honour to my cottage in the country, and to a mug of penny ale. 'Tis not

poverty that's the hardest to bear, or the least happy lot in life," says Mr. Addison, shaking the ash out of his pipe. "See, my pipe is smoked out. Shall we have another bottle? I have still a couple in the cupboard, and of the right sort. No more?—let us go abroad and take a turn on the Mall, or look in at the theatre and see Dick's comedy. 'Tis not a masterpiece of wit; but Dick is a good fellow, though he doth not set the Thames on fire."

Within a month after this day, Mr. Addison's ticket had come up a prodigious prize in the lottery of life. All the town was in an uproar of admiration of his poem, the "Campaign," which Dick Steele was spouting at every coffee-house in Whitehall and Covent Garden. The wits on the other side of Temple Bar saluted him at once as the greatest poet the world had seen for ages; the people huzza'ed for Marlborough and for Addison, and, more than this, the party in power provided for the meritorious poet, and Mr. Addison got the appointment of Commissioner of Excise, which the famous Mr. Locke vacated, and rose from this place to other dignities and honours; his prosperity from

henceforth to the end of his life being scarce ever interrupted. But I doubt whether he was not happier in his garret in the Haymarket, than ever he was in his splendid palace at Kensington; and I believe the fortune that came to him in the shape of the countess his wife, was no better than a shrew and a vixen.

Gay as the town was, 'twas but a dreary place for Mr. Esmond, whether his charmer was in it or out of it, and he was glad when his general gave him notice that he was going back to his division of the army which lay in winter-quarters at Bois-le-Duc. His dear mistress bade him farewell with a cheerful face; her blessing he knew he had always, and wheresoever fate carried him. Mrs. Beatrix was away in attendance on her Majesty at Hampton Court, and kissed her fair finger-tips to him, by way of adieu, when he rode thither to take his leave. She received her kinsman in a waiting-room where there were half a dozen more ladies of the Court, so that his high-flown speeches, had he intended to make any (and very likely he did), were impossible; and she announced to her friends that her cousin

was going to the army, in as easy a manner as she would have said he was going to a chocolate-house. He asked with a rather rueful face, if she had any orders for the army? and she was pleased to say that she would like a mantle of Mechlin lace. She made him a saucy curtsy in reply to his own dismal bow. She deigned to kiss her finger-tips from the window, where she stood laughing with the other ladies, and chanced to see him as he made his way to the Toy. The dowager at Chelsea was not sorry to part with him this time. “*Mon cher, vous êtes triste comme un sermon,*” she did him the honour to say to him; indeed, gentlemen in his condition are by no means amusing companions, and besides, the fickle old woman had now found a much more amiable favourite, and *raffoléd* for her darling lieutenant of the Guard. Frank, remained behind for a while, and did not join the army till later, in the suite of His Grace the Commander-in-Chief. His dear mother, on the last day before Esmond went away, and when the three dined together, made Esmond promise to befriend her boy, and besought Frank to take the example of his kinsman as of a loyal gentle-

man and brave foldier, fo ſhe was pleaſed to ſay ; and at parting, betrayed not the leaſt ſign of faltering or weakneſs, though, God knows, that fond heart was fearful enough when others were concerned, though ſo reſolute in bearing its own pain.

Elmond's general embarked at Harwich. 'Twas a grand ſight to ſee Mr. Webb dreſſed in ſcarlet on the deck, waving his hat as our yatch put off, and the guns ſaluted from the ſhore. Harry did not ſee his viſcount again, until three months after, at Bois-le-Duc, when his Grace the Duke came to take the command, and Frank brought a budget of news from home: how he had ſupped with this actreſs, and got tired of that; how he had got the better of Mr. St. John, both over the bottle, and with Mrs. Mountford, of the Haymarket Theatre, (a veteran charmer of fifty, with whom the young ſcape-grace choſe to fancy himſelf in love); how his ſiſter was always at her tricks, and had jilted a young baron for an old earl. "I can't make out Beatrix," he ſaid; "ſhe cares for none of us—ſhe only thinks about herſelf; ſhe is never happy unleſs ſhe is quarrelling; but as for my mother,—my mother,

Harry, is an angel." Harry tried to impress on the young fellow the necessity of doing everything in his power to please that angel; not to drink too much; not to go into debt; not to run after the pretty Flemish girls, and so forth, as became a senior speaking to a lad. "But Lord bless thee!" the boy said; "I may do what I like, and I know she will love me all the same;" and so, indeed, he did what he liked. Everybody spoiled him, and his grave kinsman as much as the rest.

CHAPTER XII.



I GET A COMPANY IN THE CAMPAIGN OF 1706.

ON Whit-Sunday, the famous 23rd of May, 1706, my young lord first came under the fire of the enemy, whom we found posted in order of battle, their lines extending three miles or more, over the high ground behind the little Gheet river, and having on his left the little village of Anderkirk or Autre-église, and on his right Ramillies, which has given its name to one of the most brilliant and disastrous days of battle that history ever hath recorded.

Our Duke here once more met his old enemy of Blenheim, the Bavarian Elector and the Marechal Villeroy, over whom the Prince of Savoy had gained the famous victory of Chiari. What Englishman or Frenchman doth not know the issue of that day? Having chosen his own

ground, having a force superior to the English, and besides the excellent Spanish and Bavarian troops, the whole *Maïson-du-Roy* with him, the most splendid body of Horse in the world,—in an hour (and in spite of the prodigious gallantry of the French Royal Household, who charged through the centre of our line and broke it), this magnificent army of Villeroy was utterly routed by troops that had been marching for twelve hours, and by the intrepid skill of a commander, who did, indeed, seem in the presence of the enemy to be the very Genius of Victory.

I think it was more from conviction than policy, though that policy was surely the most prudent in the world, that the great Duke always spoke of his victories with an extraordinary modesty, and as if it was not so much his own admirable genius and courage which achieved these amazing successes, but as if he was a special and fatal instrument in the hands of Providence, that willed irresistibly the enemy's overthrow. Before his actions he always had the Church service read solemnly, and professed an undoubting belief that our Queen's arms were blessed and our victory sure. All the letters

which he writ after his battles shew awe rather than exultation ; and he attributes the glory of these achievements, about which I have heard mere petty officers and men bragging with a pardonable vain-glory, in no wise to his own bravery or skill, but to the superintending protection of Heaven, which he ever seemed to think was our especial ally. And our army got to believe so, and the enemy learnt to think so too ; for we never entered into a battle without a perfect confidence that it was to end in a victory ; nor did the French, after the issue of Blenheim, and that astonishing triumph of Ramillies, ever meet us without feeling that the game was lost before it was begun to be played, and that our general's fortune was irresistible. Here, as at Blenheim, the Duke's charger was shot, and 'twas thought for a moment he was dead. As he mounted another, Binfield, his Master-of-the-Horse, kneeling to hold his Grace's stirrup, had his head shot away by a cannon-ball. A French gentleman of the Royal Household, that was a prisoner with us, told the writer that at the time of the charge of the Household, when their Horse and ours were mingled, an Irish officer

recognised the Prince-Duke, and calling out—“Marlborough, Marlborough!” fired his pistol at him *à bout-portant*, and that a score more carbines and pistols were discharged at him. Not one touched him : he rode through the French Cuirassiers sword-in-hand, and entirely unhurt, and calm and smiling rallied the German Horse, that was reeling before the enemy, brought these and twenty squadrons of Orkney’s back upon them, and drove the French across the river again,—leading the charge himself, and defeating the only dangerous move the French made that day.

Major-General Webb commanded on the left of our line, and had his own regiment under the orders of their beloved colonel. Neither he nor they belied their character for gallantry on this occasion ; but it was about his dear young lord that Esmond was anxious, never having sight of him save once, in the whole course of the day, when he brought an order from the Commander-in-Chief to Mr. Webb. When our Horse, having charged round the right flank of the enemy by Overkirk, had thrown him into entire confusion, a general advance was made, and our whole line of Foot, crossing the little river and

the morafs, afcended the high ground where the French were pofted, cheering as they went, the enemy retreating before them. 'Twas a fervice of more glory than danger, the French battalions never waiting to exchange push of pike or bayonet with ours ; and the gunners flying from their pieces which our line left behind us as they advanced, and the French fell back.

At firft it was a retreat orderly enough ; but prefently the retreat became a rout, and a frightful flaughter of the French enfued on this panick ; fo that an army of fixty thoufand men was utterly crufted and deftroyed in the courfe of a couple of hours. It was as if a hurricane had feized a compact and numerous fleet, flung it all to the winds, fhattered, funk, and annihilated it ; *afflavit Deus, et diffipati funt*. The French army of Flanders was gone, their artillery, their ftandards, their treafure, provifions, and ammunition were all left behind them : the poor devils had even fled without their foup-kettles, which are as much the palladia of the French infantry as of the Grand Signor's Janiffaries, and round which they rally even more than round their lilies.

The purfuit, and a dreadful carnage which

ensued (for the dregs of a battle, however brilliant, are ever a base residue of rapine, cruelty, and drunken plunder), was carried far beyond the field of Ramillies.

Honest Lockwood, Esmond's servant, no doubt wanted to be among the marauders himself and take his share of the booty; for when, the action over, and the troops got to their ground for the night, the Captain bade Lockwood get a horse, he asked, with a very rueful countenance, whether his honour would have him come, too; but his honour only bade him go about his own business, and Jack hopped away quite delighted as soon as he saw his master mounted. Esmond made his way, and not without danger and difficulty, to his Grace's head-quarters, and found for himself very quickly where the aides-de-camp's quarters were, in an out-building of a farm, where several of these gentlemen were seated, drinking and singing, and at supper. If he had any anxiety about his boy, 'twas relieved at once. One of the gentlemen was singing a song to a tune that Mr. Farquhar and Mr. Gay both had used in their admirable comedies, and very

popular in the army of that day ; after the song came a chorus, “ Over the hills and far away ; ” and Esmond heard Frank’s fresh voice soaring, as it were, over the songs of the rest of the young men—a voice that had always a certain artless, indescribable pathos with it, and indeed which caused Mr. Esmond’s eyes to fill with tears now, out of thankfulness to God the child was safe and still alive to laugh and sing.

When the song was over Esmond entered the room, where he knew several of the gentlemen present, and there sat my young lord, having taken off his cuirass, his waistcoat open, his face flushed, his long yellow hair hanging over his shoulders, drinking with the rest ; the youngest, gayest, handsomest there. As soon as he saw Esmond, he clapped down his glass, and, running towards his friend, put both his arms round him and embraced him. The other’s voice trembled with joy as he greeted the lad ; he had thought but now as he stood in the court-yard under the clear-shining moonlight ; “ Great God ! what a scene of murder is here within a mile of us ; what hundreds and thousands have faced danger to-day ; and here are these lads singing over their cups,

and the same moon that is shining over yonder horrid field is looking down on Walcote very likely, while my lady sits and thinks about her boy that is at the war." As Esmond embraced his young pupil now, 'twas with the feeling of quite religious thankfulness, and an almost paternal pleasure that he beheld him.

Round his neck was a star with a striped ribbon, that was made of small brilliants and might be worth a hundred crowns. "Look," says he, "won't that be a pretty present for mother?"

"Who gave you the Order?" says Harry, saluting the gentleman: "did you win it in battle?"

"I won it," cried the other, "with my sword and my spear. There was a mousquetaire that had it round his neck,—such a big mousquetaire, as big as General Webb. I called out to him to surrender, and that I'd give him quarter: he called me a *petit polisson*, and fired his pistol at me, and then sent it at my head with a curse. I rode at him, sir, drove my sword right under his arm-hole, and broke it in the rascal's body. I found a purse in his holster with sixty-five Louis

in it, and a bundle of love-letters, and a flask of Hungary-water. *Vive la guerre!* there are the ten pieces you lent me. I should like to have a fight every day;" and he pulled at his little mouftache and bade a fervant bring a fupper to Captain Efmond.

Harry fell to with a very good appetite; he had tafted nothing fince twenty hours ago, at early dawn. Mafter Grandfon, who read this, do you look for the hiftory of battles and fieges? Go, find them in the proper books; this is only the ftory of your grandfather and his family. Far more pleafant to him than the victory, though for that too he may fay *meminiffe juvat*, it was to find that the day was over, and his dear young Castlewood was unhurt.

And would you, firrah, wifh to know how it was that a fedate Captain of Foot, a ftudious and rather folitary bachelor of eight or nine and twenty years of age, who did not care very much for the jollities which his comrades engaged in, and was never known to lofe his heart in any garrifon-town—fhould you wifh to know why fuch a man had fo prodigious a tendernefs, and tended fo fondly a boy of eighteen, wait, my

good friend, until thou art in love with thy school-fellow's sister, and then see how mighty tender thou wilt be towards him. Esmond's general and his Grace the Prince-Duke were notoriously at variance, and the former's friendship was in no wise likely to advance any man's promotion, of whose services Webb spoke well; but rather likely to injure him, so the army said, in the favour of the greater man. However, Mr. Esmond had the good fortune to be mentioned very advantageously by Major-General Webb in his report after the action; and the major of his regiment and two of the captains having been killed upon the day of Ramillies, Esmond, who was second of the lieutenants, got his company, and had the honour of serving as Captain Esmond in the next campaign.

My lord went home in the winter, but Esmond was afraid to follow him. His dear mistress wrote him letters more than once, thanking him, as mothers know how to thank, for his care and protection of her boy, extolling Esmond's own merits with a great deal more praise than they deserved; for he did his duty no better than any other officer; and speaking sometimes, though

gently and cautiously, of Beatrix. News came from home of at least half a dozen grand matches that the beautiful maid of honour was about to make. She was engaged to an earl, our gentlemen of St. James's said, and then jilted him for a duke, who, in his turn, had drawn off. Earl or duke it might be who should win this Helen, Esmond knew she would never bestow herself on a poor captain. Her conduct, it was clear, was little satisfactory to her mother, who scarcely mentioned her, or else the kind lady thought it was best to say nothing, and leave time to work out its cure. At any rate, Harry was best away from the fatal object which always wrought him so much mischief; and so he never asked for leave to go home, but remained with his regiment that was garrisoned in Bruffels, which city fell into our hands when the victory of Ramillies drove the French out of Flanders.

CHAPTER XIII.



I MEET AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE IN FLANDERS, AND FIND
MY MOTHER'S GRAVE AND MY OWN CRADLE THERE.

BEING one day in the Church of St. Gudule, at Bruffels, admiring the antique splendour of the architecture (and always entertaining a great tenderness and reverence for the Mother Church, that hath been as wickedly persecuted in England, as ever she herself persecuted in the days of her prosperity), Esmond saw kneeling at a side altar, an officer in a green uniform coat, very deeply engaged in devotion. Something familiar in the figure and posture of the kneeling man struck Captain Esmond, even before he saw the officer's face. As he rose up, putting away into his pocket a little black breviary, such as priests use, Esmond beheld a countenance so like that of his friend and tutor of early days, Father Holt, that he broke out into an exclamation of

astonishment and advanced a step towards the gentleman, who was making his way out of church. The German officer too looked surprised when he saw Esmond, and his face from being pale grew suddenly red. By this mark of recognition, the Englishman knew that he could not be mistaken; and though the other did not stop, but on the contrary rather hastily walked away towards the door; Esmond pursued him and faced him once more, as the officer, helping himself to holy water, turned mechanically towards the altar to bow to it ere he quitted the sacred edifice.

“My Father!” says Esmond in English.

“Silence! I do not understand. I do not speak English,” says the other, in Latin.

Esmond smiled at this sign of confusion, and replied in the same language. “I should know my Father in any garment, black or white, shaven or bearded:” for the Austrian officer was habited quite in the military manner, and had as warlike a moustachio as any Pandour.

He laughed—we were on the church steps by this time passing through the crowd of beggars that usually is there holding up little trinkets for

false and whining for alms. "You speak Latin," says he, "in the English way, Harry Esmond; you have forsaken the old true Roman tongue you once knew." His tone was very frank, and friendly quite; the kind voice of fifteen years back; he gave Esmond his hand as he spoke.

"Others have changed their coats too, my Father," says Esmond, glancing at his friend's military decoration.

"Hush! I am Mr. or Captain von Holtz, in the Bavarian Elector's service, and on a mission to his Highness the Prince of Savoy. You can keep a secret I know from old times."

"Captain von Holtz," says Esmond, "I am your very humble servant."

"And you too have changed your coat," continues the other in his laughing way; "I have heard of you at Cambridge and afterwards: we have friends everywhere; and I am told that Mr. Esmond at Cambridge was as good a fencer as he was a bad theologian." (So, thinks Esmond, my old *maître d'armes* was a Jesuit as they said.)

"Perhaps you are right," says the other, reading his thoughts quite as he used to do in

old days : “ you were all but killed at Hochstedt of a wound in the left side. You were before that at Vigo, aide-de-camp to the Duke of Ormonde. You got your company the other day after Ramillies ; your general and the Prince-Duke are not friends ; he is of the Webbs of Lydiard Tregoze, in the county of York, a relation of my Lord St. John. Your cousin, M. de Castlewood, served his first campaign this year in the Guard : yes, I do know a few things as you see.”

Captain Esmond laughed in his turn. “ You have indeed a curious knowledge,” he says. A foible of Mr. Holt’s, who did know more about books and men than, perhaps, almost any person Esmond had ever met, was omniscience ; thus in every point he here professed to know, he was nearly right, but not quite. Esmond’s wound was in the right side, not the left, his first general was General Lumley ; Mr. Webb came out of Wiltshire, not out of Yorkshire ; and so forth. Esmond did not think fit to correct his old master in these trifling blunders, but they served to give him a knowledge of the other’s character, and he smiled to think that this was

his oracle of early days ; only now no longer infallible or divine.

“ Yes,” continues Father Holt, or Captain von Holtz, “ for a man who has not been in England these eight years, I know what goes on in London very well. The old Dean is dead, my Lady Castlewood’s father. Do you know that your recusant bishops wanted to consecrate him Bishop of Southampton, and that Collier is Bishop of Thetford by the same imposition ? The Princess Anne has the gout and eats too much ; when the King returns, Collier will be an archbishop.”

“ Amen !” says Esmond, laughing ; “ and I hope to see your eminence no longer in jack-boots, but red stockings, at Whitehall.”

“ You are always with us—I know that—I heard of that when you were at Cambridge ; so was the late lord ; so is the young viscount.”

“ And so was my father before me,” said Mr. Esmond, looking calmly at the other, who did not, however, show the least sign of intelligence in his impenetrable grey eyes—how well Harry remembered them and their look ! only crow’s feet were wrinkled round them—marks of black old Time, who had settled there.

Esmond's face chose to show no more sign of meaning than the Father's. There may have been on the one side and the other just the faintest glitter of recognition, as you see a bayonet shining out of an ambush; but each party fell back, when everything was again dark.

"And you, *mon capitaine*, where have you been?" says Esmond, turning away the conversation from this dangerous ground, where neither chose to engage.

"I may have been in Pekin," says he, "or I may have been in Paraguay—who knows where? I am now Captain von Holtz, in the service of his Electoral Highness, come to negotiate exchange of prisoners with his Highness of Savoy."

'Twas well known that very many officers in our army were well-affected towards the young king at St. Germain's, whose right to the throne was undeniable, and whose accession to it, at the death of his sister, by far the greater part of the English people would have preferred, to the having a petty German prince for a sovereign, about whose cruelty, rapacity, boorish manners, and odious foreign ways, a thousand stories were

current. It wounded our English pride to think, that a shabby high-Dutch duke, whose revenues were not a tithe as great as those of many of the princes of our ancient English nobility, who could not speak a word of our language, and whom we chose to represent as a sort of German boor, feeding on train-oil and four-cROUT, with a bevy of mistresses in a barn, should come to reign over the proudest and most polished people in the world. Were we, the conquerors of the Grand Monarch, to submit to that ignoble domination? What did the Hanoverian's Protestantism matter to us? Was it not notorious (we were told and led to believe so) that one of the daughters of this Protestant hero was being bred up with no religion at all, as yet, and ready to be made Lutheran or Roman, according as the husband might be, whom her parents should find for her? This talk, very idle and abusive much of it was, went on at a hundred mess-tables in the army; there was scarce an ensign that did not hear it, or join in it, and everybody knew, or affected to know, that the Commander-in-Chief himself had relations with his nephew, the Duke of Berwick

('twas by an Englishman, thank God, that we were beaten at Almanza), and that his Grace was most anxious to restore the royal race of his benefactors, and to repair his former treason.

This is certain, that for a considerable period no officer in the Duke's army lost favour with the Commander-in-Chief for entertaining or proclaiming his loyalty towards the exiled family. When the Chevalier de St. George, as the King of England called himself, came with the dukes of the French blood royal, to join the French army under Vendosme, hundreds of ours saw him and cheered him, and we all said he was like his father in this, who, seeing the action of La Hogue fought between the French ships and ours, was on the side of his native country during the battle. But this, at least, the Chevalier knew, and every one knew, that, however well our troops and their general might be inclined towards the prince personally, in the face of the enemy there was no question at all. Wherever my Lord Duke found a French army, he would fight and beat it, as he did at Oudenarde, two years after Ramillies, where his Grace achieved another of his transcendent victories; and the

noble young prince, who charged gallantly along with the magnificent Maison-du-Roy, sent to compliment his conquerors after the action.

In this battle, where the young Electoral Prince of Hanover behaved himself very gallantly, fighting on our side, Esmond's dear General Webb distinguished himself prodigiously, exhibiting consummate skill and coolness as a general, and fighting with the personal bravery of a common soldier. Esmond's good luck again attended him; he escaped without a hurt, although more than a third of his regiment was killed, had again the honour to be favourably mentioned in his commander's report, and was advanced to the rank of major. But of this action there is little need to speak, as it hath been related in every Gazette, and talked of in every hamlet in this country. To return from it to the writer's private affairs, which here, in his old age, and at a distance, he narrates for his children who come after him. Before Oudenarde, and after that chance rencontre with Captain von Holtz, at Brussels, a space of more than a year elapsed, during which the captain of Jesuits and the captain of Webb's Fusileers were thrown

very much together. Esmond had no difficulty in finding out (indeed, the other made no secret of it to him, being assured from old times of his pupil's fidelity), that the negotiator of prisoners was an agent from St. Germain's, and that he carried intelligence between great personages in our camp and that of the French. "My business," said he, "and I tell you, both because I can trust you, and your keen eyes have already discovered it, is between the King of England and his subjects, here engaged in fighting the French king. As between you and them, all the Jesuits in the world will not prevent your quarrelling : fight it out, gentlemen. St. George for England, I say—and you know who says so, wherever he may be."

I think Holt loved to make a parade of mystery, as it were, and would appear and disappear at our quarters as suddenly as he used to return and vanish in the old days at Castlewood. He had passes between both armies, and seemed to know (but with that inaccuracy which belonged to the good Father's omniscience) equally well what passed in the French camp and in ours. One day he would give Esmond news of a great

feste that took place in the French quarters, of a supper of Monsieur de Rohan's, where there was play and violins, and then dancing and masques : the King drove thither in Marshal Villar's own guinguette. Another day he had the news of his Majesty's ague, the King had not had a fit these ten days, and might be said to be well. Captain Holtz made a visit to England during this time, so eager was he about negotiating prisoners ; and 'twas on returning from this voyage that he began to open himself more to Esmond, and to make him, as occasion served, at their various meetings, several of those confidences which are here set down all together.

The reason of his increased confidence was this : upon going to London, the old director of Esmond's aunt, the dowager, paid her ladyship a visit at Chelsea, and there learnt from her that Captain Esmond was acquainted with the secret of his family, and was determined never to divulge it. The knowledge of this fact raised Esmond in his old tutor's eyes, so Holt was pleased to say, and he admired Harry very much for his abnegation.

“ The family at Castlewood have done far

more for me than my own ever did," Esmond said. "I would give my life for them. Why should I grudge the only benefit that 'tis in my power to confer on them?" The good Father's eyes filled with tears at this speech, which to the other seemed very simple: he embraced Esmond, and broke out into many admiring expressions; he said he was a *noble cœur*, that he was proud of him, and fond of him as his pupil and friend,—regretted more than ever that he had lost him, and been forced to leave him in those early times, when he might have had an influence over him, have brought him into that only true church, to which the Father belonged, and enlisted him in the noblest army in which a man ever engaged,—meaning his own Society of Jesus, which numbers (says he) in its troops the greatest heroes the world ever knew;—warriors, brave enough to dare or endure anything, to encounter any odds, to die any death;—soldiers that have won triumphs a thousand times more brilliant than those of the greatest general: that have brought nations on their knees to their sacred banner, the Cross; that have achieved glories and palms incom-

parably brighter than those awarded to the most splendid earthly conquerors,—crowns of immortal light, and seats in the high places of Heaven.

Esmond was thankful for his old friend's good opinion, however little he might share the Jesuit-father's enthusiasm. "I have thought of that question, too," says he, "dear Father," and he took the other's hand—"thought it out for myself, as all men must, and contrive to do the right, and trust to Heaven as devoutly in my way as you in yours. Another six months of you as a child, and I had desired no better. I used to weep upon my pillow at Castlewood as I thought of you, and I might have been a brother of your order ; and who knows," Esmond added, with a smile, "a priest in full orders, and with a pair of moustachios, and a Bavarian uniform."

"My son," says Father Holt, turning red, "in the cause of religion and loyalty all disguises are fair."

"Yes," broke in Esmond, "all disguises are fair, you say ; and all uniforms, say I, black or red,—a black cockade or a white one, or a laced hat, or a sombrero, with a tonsure under it. I

cannot believe that St. Francis Xavier failed over the sea in a cloak, or raised the dead—I tried; and very nearly did once, but cannot. Suffer me to do the right, and to hope for the best in my own way.”

Esmond wished to cut short the good Father’s theology, and succeeded; and the other, fighting over his pupil’s invincible ignorance, did not withdraw his affection from him, but gave him his utmost confidence—as much, that is to say, as a priest can give: more than most do; for he was naturally garrulous, and too eager to speak.

Holt’s friendship encouraged Captain Esmond to ask, what he long wished to know, and none could tell him, some history of the poor mother whom he had often imagined in his dreams, and whom he never knew. He described to Holt those circumstances which are already put down in the first part of this story,—the promise he had made to his dear lord, and that dying friend’s confession; and he besought Mr. Holt to tell him what he knew regarding the poor woman from whom he had been taken.

“She was of this very town,” Holt said, and took Esmond to see the street where her father

lived, and where, as he believed, she was born. “ In 1676, when your father came hither in the retinue of the late king, then Duke of York, and banished hither in disgrace, Captain Thomas Esmond became acquainted with your mother, pursued her, and made a victim of her : he hath told me in many subsequent conversations, which I felt bound to keep private then, that she was a woman of great virtue and tenderness, and in all respects a most fond, faithful creature. He called himself Captain Thomas, having good reason to be ashamed of his conduct towards her, and hath spoken to me many times with sincere remorse for that, as with fond love for her many amiable qualities. He owned to having treated her very ill ; and that at this time his life was one of profligacy, gambling, and poverty. She became with child of you ; was cursed by her own parents at that discovery ; though she never upbraided, except by her involuntary tears, and the misery depicted on her countenance, the author of her wretchedness and ruin.

“ Thomas Esmond—Captain Thomas, as he was called—became engaged in a gaming-house brawl, of which the consequence was a duel, and

a wound, so severe that he never—his surgeon said—could outlive it. Thinking his death certain, and touched with remorse, he sent for a priest, of the very Church of St. Gudule, where I met you; and on the same day, after his making submission to our church, was married to your mother a few weeks before you were born. My Lord Viscount Castlewood, Marquis of Esmond by King James's patent, which I myself took to your father, your lordship was christened at St. Gudule by the same curé who married your parents, and by the name of Henry Thomas, son of E. Thomas, officer Anglois, and Gertrude Maes. You see you belong to us from your birth, and why I did not christen you when you became my dear little pupil at Castlewood.

“Your father's wound took a favourable turn, —perhaps his conscience was eased by the right he had done,—and to the surprise of the doctors he recovered. But as his health came back, his wicked nature, too, returned. He was tired of the poor girl, whom he had ruined; and receiving some remittance from his uncle, my lord the old viscount then in

England, he pretended business, promised return, and never saw your poor mother more.

“He owned to me, in confession first, but afterwards in talk before your aunt, his wife, else I never could have disclosed what I now tell you, that on coming to London he writ a pretended confession to poor Gertrude Maes—Gertrude Esmond—of his having been married in England previously, before uniting himself with her ; said that his name was not Thomas : that he was about to quit Europe for the Virginia plantations, where, indeed, your family had a grant of land from King Charles the First ; sent her a supply of money, the half of the last hundred guineas he had, entreated her pardon, and bade her farewell.

“Poor Gertrude never thought that the news in this letter might be untrue as the rest of your father’s conduct to her. But though a young man of her own degree, who knew her history, and whom she liked before she saw the English gentleman who was the cause of all her misery, offered to marry her, and to adopt you as his own child, and give you his name, she refused him. This refusal only angered her father, who

had taken her home ; she never held up her head there, being the subject of constant unkindness after her fall ; and some devout ladies of her acquaintance offering to pay a little pension for her, she went into a convent, and you were put out to nurse.

“ A sister of the young fellow, who would have adopted you as his son, was the person who took charge of you. Your mother and this person were cousins. She had just lost a child of her own, which you replaced, your own mother being too sick and feeble to feed you ; and presently your nurse grew so fond of you, that she even grudged letting you visit the convent where your mother was, and where the nuns petted the little infant, as they pitied and loved its unhappy parent. Her vocation became stronger every day, and at the end of two years she was received as a sister of the house.

“ Your nurse’s family were silk-weavers out of France, whither they returned to Arras in French Flanders, shortly before your mother took her vows, carrying you with them, then a child of three years old. ’Twas a town, before the late vigorous measures of the French king,

full of Protestants, and here your nurse's father, old Pastoureau, he with whom you afterwards lived at Ealing, adopted the Reformed doctrines, perverting all his house with him. They were expelled thence by the edict of his most Christian Majesty, and came to London, and set up their looms in Spittlefields. The old man brought a little money with him, and carried on his trade, but in a poor way. He was a widower ; by this time his daughter, a widow too, kept house for him, and his son and he laboured together at their vocation. Meanwhile your father had publickly owned his conversion just before King Charles's death (in whom our church had much such another convert), was reconciled to my Lord Viscount Castlewood and married, as you know, to his daughter.

“ It chanced that the younger Pastoureau, going with a piece of brocade to the mercer, who employed him, on Ludgate Hill, met his old rival coming out of an ordinary there. Pastoureau knew your father at once, seized him by the collar, and upbraided him as a villain, who had seduced his mistress, and afterwards deserted her and her son. Mr. Thomas Esmond

also recognised Pastoureau at once, besought him to calm his indignation, and not to bring a crowd round about them ; and bade him to enter into the tavern, out of which he had just stepped, when he would give him any explanation. Pastoureau entered, and heard the landlord order the drawer to show Captain Thomas to a room ; it was by his Christian name that your father was familiarly called at his tavern haunts, which, to say the truth, were none of the most reputable.

“ I must tell you that Captain Thomas, or my Lord Viscount afterwards, was never at a loss for a story, and could cajole a woman or a dun with a volubility, and an air of simplicity at the same time, of which many a creditor of his has been the dupe. His tales used to gather verisimilitude as he went on with them. He strung together fact after fact with a wonderful rapidity and coherence. It required, saving your presence, a very long habit of acquaintance with your father to know when his lordship was l——, —telling the truth or no.

“ He told me with rueful remorse when he was ill—for the fear of death set him instantly

repenting, and with shrieks of laughter when he was well, his lordship having a very great sense of humour—how in half-an-hour's time, and before a bottle was drunk, he had completely succeeded in biting poor Pastoureau. The seduction he owned to: that he could not help: he was quite ready with tears at a moment's warning, and shed them profusely to melt his credulous listener. He wept for your mother even more than Pastoureau did, who cried very heartily, poor fellow, as my lord informed me; he swore upon his honour that he had twice sent money to Brussels, and mentioned the name of the merchant with whom it was lying for poor Gertrude's use. He did not even know whether she had a child or no, or whether she was alive or dead; but got these facts easily out of honest Pastoureau's answers to him. When he heard that she was in a convent, he said he hoped to end his days in one himself, should he survive his wife, whom he hated, and had been forced by a cruel father to marry; and when he was told that Gertrude's son was alive, and actually in London, 'I started,' says he; 'for then, damme, my wife was expecting to lie-in,

and I thought, should this old Put, my father-in-law, run rusty, here would be a good chance to frighten him.'

"He expressed the deepest gratitude to the Pastoureau family for their care of the infant : you were now near fix years old ; and on Pastoureau bluntly telling him when he proposed to go that instant and see the darling child, that they never wished to see his ill-omened face again within their doors ; that he might have the boy, though they should all be very sorry to lose him ; and that they would take his money, they being poor, if he gave it ; or bring him up, by God's help, as they had hitherto done, without : he acquiesced in this at once, with a sigh, said, ' Well, 'twas better that the dear child should remain with friends who had been so admirably kind to him ; ' and in his talk to me afterwards, honestly praised and admired the weaver's conduct and spirit ; owned that the Frenchman was a right fellow, and he, the Lord have mercy upon him, a sad villain.

"Your father," Mr. Holt went on to say, "was good-natured with his money when he had it ; and having that day received a supply from his

uncle, gave the weaver ten pieces with perfect freedom, and promised him further remittances. He took down eagerly Pastoureau's name and place of abode in his table-book, and when the other asked him for his own, gave, with the utmost readiness, his name as Captain Thomas, New Lodge, Penzance, Cornwall; he said he was in London for a few days only on business connected with his wife's property; described her as a shrew, though a woman of kind disposition; and depicted his father as a Cornish squire, in an infirm state of health, at whose death he hoped for something handsome, when he promised richly to reward the admirable protector of his child, and to provide for the boy. 'And by Gad, sir,' he said to me in his strange laughing way, 'I ordered a piece of brocade of the very same pattern as that which the fellow was carrying, and presented it to my wife for a morning wrapper, to receive company in after she lay-in of our little boy.'

"Your little pension was paid regularly enough; and when your father became Viscount Castlewood on his uncle's demise, I was employed to keep a watch over you, and 'twas at my

instance that you were brought home. Your foster-mother was dead; her father made acquaintance with a woman whom he married, who quarrelled with his son. The faithful creature came back to Brussels to be near the woman he loved, and died, too, a few months before her. Will you see her cross in the convent cemetery? The Superior is an old penitent of mine, and remembers Sœur Marie Madeleine fondly still."

Esmond came to this spot in one funny evening of spring, and saw, amidst a thousand black crosses, casting their shadows across the grassy mounds, that particular one which marked his mother's resting-place. Many more of those poor creatures that lay there had adopted that same name, with which sorrow had rebaptised her, and which fondly seemed to hint their individual story of love and grief. He fancied her, in tears and darkness, kneeling at the foot of her cross, under which her cares were buried. Surely he knelt down, and said his own prayer there, not in sorrow so much as in awe (for even his memory had no recollection of her), and in pity for the pangs which the gentle soul in life had

been made to suffer. To this cross she brought them ; for this heavenly bridegroom she exchanged the husband who had wooed her, the traitor who had left her. A thousand such hillocks lay round about, the gentle daisies springing out of the grass over them, and each bearing its cross and requiescat. A nun, veiled in black, was kneeling hard by, at a sleeping sister's bed-side (so fresh made, that the spring had scarce had time to spin a coverlid for it) ; beyond the cemetery walls you had glimpses of life and the world, and the spires and gables of the city. A bird came down from a roof opposite, and lit first on a cross, and then on the grass below it, whence it flew away presently with a leaf in its mouth : then came a sound as of chanting, from the chapel of the sisters hard by : others had long since filled the place, which poor Mary Magdeleine once had there, were kneeling at the same stall, and hearing the same hymns and prayers in which her stricken heart had found consolation. Might she sleep in peace—might she sleep in peace ; and we, too, when our struggles and pains are over ! But the earth is the Lord's, as the heaven is ; we are alike His

creatures, here and yonder. I took a little flower off the hillock, and kissed it, and went my way like the bird that had just lighted on the cross by me, back into the world again. Silent receptacle of death ! tranquil depth of calm, out of reach of tempest and trouble ! I felt as one who had been walking below the sea, and treading amidst the bones of shipwrecks.

CHAPTER XIV.



THE CAMPAIGN OF 1707, 1708.

DURING the whole of the year which succeeded that in which the glorious battle of Ramillies had been fought, our army made no movement of importance, much to the disgust of very many of our officers, remaining inactive in Flanders, who said that his Grace the Captain-General had had fighting enough, and was all for money now, and the enjoyment of his five thousand a-year and his splendid palace at Woodstock, which was now being built. And his Grace had sufficient occupation fighting his enemies at home this year, where it begun to be whispered that his favour was decreasing, and his duchess losing her hold on the Queen, who was transferring her royal affections to the famous Mrs. Masham, and Mrs. Masham's humble

servant, Mr. Harley. Against their intrigues, our Duke passed a great part of his time intriguing. Mr. Harley was got out of office, and his Grace, in so far, had a victory. But her Majesty, convinced against her will, was of that opinion still, of which the poet says people are, when so convinced, and Mr. Harley before long had his revenge.

Meanwhile the business of fighting did not go on any way to the satisfaction of Marlborough's gallant lieutenants. During all 1707, with the French before us, we had never so much as a battle; our army in Spain was utterly routed at Almanza by the gallant Duke of Berwick; and we of Webb's, which regiment the young Duke had commanded before his father's abdication, were a little proud to think that it was our colonel who had achieved this victory. "I think if I had had Galway's place, and my Fusileers," says our general, "we would not have laid down our arms, even to our old colonel, as Galway did; and Webb's officers swore if we had had Webb, at least we would not have been taken prisoners. Our dear old general talked incautiously of himself and of others; a braver or

a more brilliant foldier never lived than he ; but he blew his honest trumpet rather more loudly than became a commander of his station, and, mighty man of valour as he was, shook his great spear, and blustered before the army too fiercely.

Myfterious Mr. Holtz went off on a fecret expedition in the early part of 1708, with great elation of fpirits, and a prophecy to Esmond that a wonderful fomething was about to take place. This fecret came out on my friend's return to the army, whither he brought a moft rueful and dejected countenance, and owned that the great fomething he had been engaged upon had failed utterly. He had been indeed with that lucklefs expedition of the Chevalier de St. George, who was fent by the French king with fhips and an army from Dunkirk, and was to have invaded and conquered Scotland. But that ill wind which ever oppofed all the projects upon which the Prince ever embarked, prevented the Chevalier's invafion of Scotland, as 'tis known, and blew poor Monsieur von Holtz back into our camp again, to fcheme and foretell, and to pry about as ufual. The Chevalier, (the King of England, as fome of us held him,) went from Dunkirk to

the French army to make the campaign against us. The Duke of Burgundy had the command this year, having the Duke of Berry with him, and the famous Marechal Vendosme, and the Duke of Matignon to aid him in the campaign. Holtz, who knew everything that was passing in Flanders and France, (and the Indies for what I know,) insisted that there would be no more fighting in 1708 than there had been in the previous year, and that our commander had reasons for keeping him quiet. Indeed, Esmond's general, who was known as a grumbler, and to have a hearty mistrust of the great Duke, and hundreds more officers besides, did not scruple to say that these private reasons came to the Duke in the shape of crown-pieces from the French King, by whom the Generalissimo was bribed to avoid a battle. There were plenty of men in our lines, quidnuncs, to whom Mr. Webb listened only too willingly, who could specify the exact sums the Duke got, how much fell to Cadogan's share, and what was the precise fee given to Doctor Hare.

And the successes with which the French began the campaign of 1708, served to give strength to

these reports of treason, which were in everybody's mouth. Our general allowed the enemy to get between us and Ghent, and declined to attack him, though for eight and forty hours the armies were in presence of each other. Ghent was taken, and on the same day Monsieur de la Mothe summoned Bruges; and these two great cities fell into the hands of the French without firing a shot. A few days afterwards La Mothe seized upon the fort of Plashendall: and it began to be supposed that all Spanish Flanders, as well as Brabant, would fall into the hands of the French troops;—when the Prince Eugene arrived from the Mozelle, and then there was no more shilly-shallying.

The Prince of Savoy always signalised his arrival at the army by a great feast (my Lord Duke's entertainments were both seldom and shabby): and I remember our general returning from this dinner with the two commanders-in-chief; his honest head a little excited by wine, which was dealt out much more liberally by the Austrian than by the English commander:—"Now," says my general, slapping the table, with an oath, "he must fight; and when he is forced

to it, d— it, no man in Europe can stand up against Jack Churchill.” Within a week the battle of Oudenarde was fought, when, hate each other as they might, Esmond’s general and the Commander-in-Chief were forced to admire each other, so splendid was the gallantry of each upon this day.

The brigade commanded by Major-General Webb gave and received about as hard knocks as any that were delivered in that action, which Mr. Esmond had the fortune to serve at the head of his own company in his regiment, under the command of their own colonel as Major-General; and it was his good luck to bring the regiment out of action as commander of it, the four senior officers above him being killed in the prodigious slaughter which happened on that day. I like to think that Jack Haythorn, who sneered at me for being a bastard and a parasite of Webb’s, as he chose to call me, and with whom I had had words, shook hands with me before the battle begun. Three days before, poor Brace our lieutenant-colonel had heard of his elder brother’s death, and was heir to a baronetcy in Norfolk, and four thousand

a-year ; Fate, that had left him harmless through a dozen campaigns, seized on him just as the world was worth living for, and he went into action, knowing, as he said, that the luck was going to turn against him. The major had just joined us—a creature of Lord Marlborough, put in much to the dislike of the other officers, and to be a spy upon us, as it was said. I know not whether the truth was so, nor who took the tattle of our mess to head-quarters, but Webb's regiment, as its colonel, was known to be in the Commander-in-Chief's black books : “ And if he did not dare to break it up at home,” our gallant old chief used to say, “ he was determined to destroy it before the enemy ;” so that poor Major Proudfoot was put into a post of danger.

Esmond's dear young viscount, serving as aide-de-camp to my Lord Duke, received a wound, and won a honourable name for himself in the Gazette ; and Captain Esmond's name was sent in for promotion by his general, too, whose favourite he was. It made his heart beat to think that certain eyes at home, the brightest in the world, might read the page on which his humble services were recorded ; but his mind

was made up steadily to keep out of their dangerous influence, and to let time and absence conquer that passion he had still lurking about him. Away from Beatrix, it did not trouble him; but he knew as certain that if he returned home, his fever would break out again, and avoided Walcote as a Lincolnshire-man avoids returning to his fens, where he is sure that the ague is lying in wait for him.

We of the English party in the army, who were inclined to sneer at everything that came out of Hanover, and to treat as little better than boors and savages the Elector's court and family, were yet forced to confess that on the day of Oudenarde, the young Electoral Prince, then making his first campaign, conducted himself with the spirit and courage of an approved soldier. On this occasion his Electoral Highness had better luck than the King of England, who was with his cousins in the enemy's camp, and had to run with them at the ignominious end of the day. With the most consummate generals in the world before them, and an admirable commander on their own side, they chose to neglect the councils, and to rush into a combat

with the former, which would have ended in the utter annihilation of their army but for the great skill and bravery of the Duke of Vendosme, who remedied, as far as courage and genius might, the disasters occasioned by the squabbles and follies of his kinsmen, the legitimate princes of the blood royal.

“ If the Duke of Berwick had but been in the army, the fate of the day would have been very different,” was all that poor Mr. von Holtz could say ; “ and you would have seen that the hero of Almanza was fit to measure swords with the conqueror of Blenheim.”

The business relative to the exchange of prisoners was always going on, and was at least that ostensible one which kept Mr. Holtz perpetually on the move between the forces of the French and the Allies. I can answer for it, that he was once very near hanged as a spy by Major-General Wayne, when he was released and sent on to head-quarters by a special order of the Commander-in-Chief. He came and went, always favoured, wherever he was, by some high though occult protection. He carried messages between the Duke of Berwick and his

uncle, our Duke. He seemed to know as well what was taking place in the Prince's quarter as our own: he brought the compliments of the King of England to some of our officers, the gentlemen of Webb's among the rest, for their behaviour on that great day; and after Wynendael, when our general was chafing at the neglect of our Commander-in-Chief, he said he knew how that action was regarded by the chiefs of the French army, and that the stand made before Wynendael wood was the passage by which the Allies entered Lille.

“Ah!” says Holtz, (and some folks were very willing to listen to him,) “if the King came by his own, how changed the conduct of affairs would be! His Majesty's very exile has this advantage, that he is enabled to read England impartially, and to judge honestly of all the eminent men. His sister is always in the hand of one greedy favourite or another, through whose eyes she sees, and to whose flattery or dependents she gives away everything. Do you suppose that his Majesty, knowing England so well as he does, would neglect such

a man as General Webb? He ought to be in the House of Peers as Lord Lydiard. The enemy and all Europe know his merit; it is that very reputation which certain great people, who hate all equality and independence, can never pardon." It was intended that these conversations should be carried to Mr. Webb. They were very welcome to him, for great as his services were, no man could value them more than John Richmond Webb did himself, and the differences between him and Marlborough being notorious, his Grace's enemies in the army and at home began to court Webb, and set him up against the all-grasping, domineering chief. And soon after the victory of Oudenarde, a glorious opportunity fell into General Webb's way, which that gallant warrior did not neglect, and which gave him the means of immensely increasing his reputation at home.

After Oudenarde, and against the counsels of Marlborough, it was said the Prince of Savoy sat down before Lille, the capital of French Flanders, and commenced that siege, the most celebrated of our time, and almost as famous as

the siege of Troy itself, for the feats of valour performed in the assault and the defence. The enmity of that Prince of Savoy against the French king was a furious personal hate, quite unlike the calm hostility of our great English general, who was no more moved by the game of war than that of billiards, and pushed forward his squadrons, and drove his red battalions hither and thither as calmly as he would combine a stroke or make a cannon with the balls. The game over (and he played it so as to be pretty sure to win it), not the least animosity against the other party remained in the breast of this consummate tactician. Whereas between the Prince of Savoy and the French it was *guerre à mort*. Beaten off in one quarter, as he had been at Toulon in the last year, he was back again on another frontier of France, assailing it with his indefatigable fury. When the Prince came to the army, the smouldering fires of war were lighted up and burst out into a flame. Our phlegmatick Dutch allies were made to advance at a quick march,—our calm Duke forced into action. The Prince was an army in himself against the French; the energy of

his hatred prodigious, indefatigable,—infectious over hundreds of thousands of men. The Emperor's general was repaying, and with a vengeance, the flight the French king had put upon the fiery little Abbé of Savoy. Brilliant and famous as a leader himself, and beyond all measure daring and intrepid, and enabled to cope with almost the best of those famous men of war who commanded the armies of the French king, Eugene had a weapon, the equal of which could not be found in France, since the cannon-shot of Sasbach laid low the noble Turenne, and could hurl Marlborough at the heads of the French host, and crush them as with a rock, under which all the gathered strength of their strongest captains must go down.

The English Duke took little part in that vast siege of Lille, which the Imperial Generalissimo pursued with all his force and vigour, further than to cover the besieging lines from the Duke of Burgundy's army, between which and the Imperialists our Duke lay. Once, when Prince Eugene was wounded, our Duke took his Highness's place in the trenches; but the siege

was with the Imperialists, not with us. A division under Webb and Rantzau was detached into Artois and Picardy upon the most painful and odious service that Mr. Esmond ever saw in the course of his military life. The wretched towns of the defenceless provinces, whose young men had been drafted away into the French armies, which year after year the insatiable war devoured, were left at our mercy; and our orders were to show them none. We found places garrisoned by invalids, and children and women: poor as they were, and as the costs of this miserable war had made them, our commission was to rob these almost starving wretches—to tear the food out of their granaries, and strip them of their rags. 'Twas an expedition of rapine and murder we were sent on: our soldiers did deeds such as an honest man must blush to remember. We brought back money and provisions in quantity to the Duke's camp; there had been no one to resist us, and yet who dares to tell with what murder and violence, with what brutal cruelty, outrage, insult, that ignoble booty had been ravished from the innocent and miserable victims of the war?

Meanwhile, gallantly as the operations before Lille had been conducted, the Allies had made but little progress, and 'twas said when we returned to the Duke of Marlborough's camp that the siege would never be brought to a satisfactory end, and that the Prince of Savoy would be forced to raise it. My Lord Marlborough gave this as his opinion openly; those who mistrusted him, and Mr. Esmond owns himself to be of the number, hinted that the Duke had his reasons why Lille should not be taken, and that he was paid to that end by the French king. If this was so, and I believe it, General Webb had now a remarkable opportunity of gratifying his hatred of the Commander-in-Chief, of balking that shameful avarice, which was one of the basest and most notorious qualities of the famous Duke, and of showing his own consummate skill as a commander. And when I consider all the circumstances preceding the event which will now be related, that my Lord Duke was actually offered certain millions of crowns, provided that the siege of Lille should be raised; that the Imperial army before it was without provisions and ammuni-

tion, and must have decamped but for the supplies that they received ; that the march of the convoy destined to relieve the siege was accurately known to the French ; and that the force covering it was shamefully inadequate to that end, and by six times inferior to Count de la Mothe's army, which was sent to intercept the convoy ; when 'tis certain that the Duke of Berwick, de la Mothe's chief, was in constant correspondence with his uncle, the English generalissimo : I believe on my conscience that 'twas my Lord Marlborough's intention to prevent those supplies, of which the Prince of Savoy stood in absolute need, from ever reaching his Highness ; that he meant to sacrifice the little army, which covered this convoy, and to betray it as he had betrayed Tollemache at Brest ; as he betrayed every friend he had, to further his own schemes of avarice or ambition. But for the miraculous victory which Esmond's general won over an army six or seven times greater than his own, the siege of Lille must have been raised ; and it must be remembered that our gallant little force was under the command of a general whom

Marlborough hated, that he was furious with the conqueror, and tried by the most open and shameless injustice afterwards to rob him of the credit of his victory.

CHAPTER XV.



GENERAL WEBB WINS THE BATTLE OF WYNENDAEL.

BY the besiegers and besieged of Lille, some of the most brilliant feats of valour were performed that ever illustrated any war. On the French side (whose gallantry was prodigious, the skill and bravery of Marshal Boufflers actually eclipsing those of his conqueror, the Prince of Savoy,) may be mentioned that daring action of Messieurs de Luxembourg and Tournefort, who, with a body of Horse and Dragoons, carried powder into the town, of which the besieged were in extreme want, each soldier bringing a bag with forty pounds of powder behind him; with which perilous provision they engaged our own Horse, faced the fire of the Foot brought out to meet them: and though half of the men were blown up in the dreadful errand they rode on, a part of

them got into the town with the succours of which the garrison was so much in want. A French officer, Monsieur du Bois, performed an act equally daring, and perfectly successful. The Duke's great army lying at Helchin, and covering the siege, and it being necessary for M. de Vendosme to get news of the condition of the place, Captain Dubois performed his famous exploit: not only passing through the lines of the siege but swimming afterwards no less than seven moats and ditches: and coming back the same way swimming with his letters in his mouth.

By these letters Monsieur de Boufflers said that he could undertake to hold the place till October; and that if one of the convoys of the Allies could be intercepted, they must raise the siege altogether.

Such a convoy as hath been said was now prepared at Ostend, and about to march for the siege; and on the 27th September we (and the French too) had news that it was on its way. It was composed of 700 wagons containing ammunition of all sorts, and was escorted out of Ostend by 2000 Infantry and 300 Horse. At

the same time M. de Lamothe quitted Bruges, having with him five-and-thirty battalions, and upwards of sixty squadrons, and forty guns in pursuit of the convoy.

Major-General Webb had meanwhile made up a force of twenty battalions, and three squadrons of dragoons, at Turout, whence he moved to cover the convoy and pursue Lamothe: with whose advanced guard ours came up upon the great plain of Turout, and before the little wood and castle of Wynendael: behind which the convoy was marching.

As soon as they came in sight of the enemy, our advanced troops were halted, with the wood behind them, and the rest of our force brought up as quickly as possible, our little body of Horse being brought forward to the opening of the plain, as our general said, to amuse the enemy. When M. Lamothe came up he found us posted in two lines in front of the wood; and formed his own army in battle facing ours, in eight lines, four of Infantry in front and Dragoons and cavalry behind.

The French began the action, as usual, with a cannonade which lasted three hours, when they

made their attack, advancing in twelve lines, four of Foot and four of Horse, upon the allied troops in the wood where we were posted. Their infantry behaved ill, they were ordered to charge with the bayonet, but, instead, began to fire, and almost at the very first discharge from our men, broke and fled. The cavalry behaved better; with these alone, who were three or four times as numerous as our whole force, Monsieur de la Mothe might have won a victory: but only two of our battalions were shaken in the least; and these speedily rallied: nor could the repeated attacks of the French horse cause our troops to budge an inch from the position in the wood in which our general had placed them.

After attacking for two hours, the French retired at nightfall entirely foiled. With all the loss we had inflicted upon him, the enemy was still three times stronger than we: and it could not be supposed that our general could pursue M. de la Mothe, or do much more than hold our ground about the wood, from which the Frenchman had in vain attempted to dislodge us. La Mothe retired behind his forty guns, his cavalry protecting them better than it had been

enabled to annoy us ; and meanwhile the convoy, which was of more importance than all our little force, and the safe passage of which we would have dropped to the last man to accomplish, marched away in perfect safety during the action, and joyfully reached the besieging camp before Lille.

Major-General Cadogan, my Lord Duke's Quarter-Master General (and between whom and Mr. Webb there was no love lost), accompanied the convoy, and joined Mr. Webb with a couple of hundred horse just as the battle was over and the enemy in full retreat. He offered, readily enough, to charge with his Horse upon the French as they fell back ; but his force was too weak to inflict any damage upon them ; and Mr. Webb, commanding as Cadogan's senior, thought enough was done in holding our ground before an enemy that might still have overwhelmed us, had we engaged him in the open territory, and in securing the safe passage of the convoy. Accordingly, the Horse brought up by Cadogan did not draw a sword ; and only prevented, by the good countenance they showed, any disposition the French might have had to renew the attack

on us. And no attack coming, at nightfall General Cadogan drew off with his squadron, being bound for head-quarters, the two generals at parting grimly saluting each other.

“He will be at Roncq time enough to lick my Lord Duke’s trenchers at supper,” says Mr. Webb.

Our own men lay out in the woods of Wynendael that night, and our general had his supper in the little castle there.

“If I was Cadogan, I would have a peerage for this day’s work,” General Webb said; “and Harry, thou shouldst have a regiment. Thou hast been reported in the last two actions: thou wert near killed in the first. I shall mention thee in my despatch to his Grace the Commander-in-Chief, and recommend thee to poor Dick Harwood’s vacant majority. Have you ever a hundred guineas to give Cardonnel? Slip them into his hand to-morrow, when you go to head-quarters with my report.”

In this report the Major-General was good enough to mention Captain Esmond’s name with particular favour; and that gentleman carried the despatch to head-quarters the next day, and

was not a little pleased to bring back a letter by his Grace's secretary, addressed to Lieutenant-General Webb. The Dutch officer despatched by Count Nassau Woudenbourg, Vælt-Mareschal Auverquerque's son, brought back also a complimentary letter to his commander, who had seconded Mr. Webb in the action with great valour and skill.

Esmond, with a low bow and a smiling face, presented his despatch, and saluted Mr. Webb as Lieutenant-General, as he gave it in. The gentlemen round about him—he was riding with his suite on the road to Menin as Esmond came up with him—gave a cheer, and he thanked them, and opened the despatch with rather a flushed eager face.

He slapped it down on his boot in a rage, after he had read it. "'Tis not even writ with his own hand. Read it out, Esmond." And Esmond read it out:—

"Sir,—Mr. Cadogan is just now come in, and has acquainted me with the success of the action you had yesterday in the afternoon against the body of troops commanded by M. de la Mothe, at Wynendael, which must be attributed

chiefly to your good conduct and resolution. You may be sure I shall do you justice at home, and be glad on all occasions to own the service you have done in securing this convoy.

“Yours, &c., M.”

“Two lines by that d——d Cardonnel, and no more, for the taking of Lille—for beating five times our number—for an action as brilliant as the best he ever fought,” says poor Mr. Webb. “Lieutenant-General! That’s not his doing. I was the oldest major-general. By ——, I believe he had been better pleased if I had been beat.”

The letter to the Dutch officer was in French, and longer and more complimentary than that to Mr. Webb.

“And this is the man,” he broke out, “that’s gorged with gold,—that’s covered with titles and honours that we won for him,—and that grudges even a line of praise to a comrade in arms! Hasn’t he enough? Don’t we fight that he may roll in riches? Well, well, wait for the Gazette, gentlemen. The Queen and the country will do us justice, if his Grace denies it us.” There were tears of rage in the brave warrior’s eyes, as he spoke; and he dashed them

off his face on to his glove. He shook his fist in the air. "O, by the Lord!" says he, "I know what I had rather have than a peerage!"

"And what is that, sir?" some of them asked.

"I had rather have a quarter of an hour with John Churchill, on a fair green field, and only a pair of rapiers between my shirt and his—"

"Sir!" interposes one.

"Tell him so! I know that's what you mean. I know every word goes to him that's dropped from every general officer's mouth. I don't say he's not brave. Curse him! he's brave enough; but we'll wait for the Gazette, gentlemen. God save her Majesty! she'll do us justice."

The Gazette did not come to us till a month afterwards; when my general and his officers had the honour to dine with Prince Eugene in Lille; his Highness being good enough to say that we had brought the provisions, and ought to share in the banquet. 'Twas a great banquet. His Grace of Marlborough was on his Highness's right, and on his left the Marechal de Boufflers, who had so bravely defended the place. The chief officers of either army were present; and you may be sure Esmond's general was

splendid this day: his tall, noble person and manly beauty of face made him remarkable anywhere; he wore, for the first time, the star of the Order of Generosity, that his Prussian Majesty had sent to him for his victory. His Highness the Prince of Savoy called a toast to the conqueror of Wynendael. My Lord Duke drank it with rather a sickly smile. The aides-de-camp were present; and Harry Esmond and his dear young lord were together, as they always strove to be when duty would permit: they were over against the table where the generals were, and could see all that passed pretty well. Frank laughed at my Lord Duke's glum face: the affair of Wynendael, and the Captain-General's conduct to Webb, had been the talk of the whole army. When his Highness spoke, and gave—"Le vainqueur de Wynendael; son armée et sa victoire," adding "qui nous font diner à Lille aujourd'hui"—there was a great cheer through the hall; for Mr. Webb's bravery, generosity, and very weaknesses of character caused him to be beloved in the army.

"Like Hector, handsome, and like Paris,

brave!" whispers Frank Castlewood. "A Venus, an elderly Venus, couldn't refuse him a pippin. Stand up, Harry, See, we are drinking the army of Wynendael. Ramillies is nothing to it. Huzzay! huzzay!"

At this very time, and just after our general had made his acknowledgment, some one brought in an English Gazette—and was passing it from hand to hand down the table. Officers were eager enough to read it; mothers and sisters at home must have fickened over it. There scarce came out a Gazette for six years that did not tell of some heroick death or some brilliant achievement.

"Here it is—Action of Wynendael—here you are, general," says Frank, seizing hold of the little dingy paper that soldiers love to read so; and, scrambling over from our bench, he went to where the General sat, who knew him, and had seen many a time at his table his laughing, handsome face, which everybody loved who saw. The generals in their great perukes made way for him. He handed the paper over General Dohna's buff coat to our general on the opposite side.

He came hobbling back, and blushing at his

feat: "I thought he'd like it, Harry," the young fellow whispered. "Didn't I like to read my name after Ramillies, in the 'London Gazette'? — Viscount Castlewood serving a volunteer——I say, what's yonder?"

Mr. Webb, reading the "Gazette," looked very strange—slapped it down on the table—then sprang up in his place, and began to,—
"Will your Highness please to——"

His Grace the Duke of Marlborough here jumped up too—"There's some mistake, my dear General Webb."

"Your Grace had better rectify it," says Mr. Webb, holding out the letter; but he was five off his Grace the Prince Duke, who, besides, was higher than the General (being seated with the Prince of Savoy, the Electoral Prince of Hanover, and the envoys of Prussia and Denmark, under a baldaquin), and Webb could not reach him, tall as he was.

"Stay," says he, with a smile, as if catching at some idea, and then, with a perfect courtesy, drawing his sword, he ran the "Gazette" through with the point, and said, "Permit me to hand it to your Grace."

The Duke looked very black. "Take it," says he, to his Master of the Horse, who was waiting behind him.

The Lieutenant-General made a very low bow, and retired and finished his glass. The "Gazette" in which Mr. Cardonnell, the Duke's secretary, gave an account of the victory of Wynendael, mentioned Mr. Webb's name, but gave the sole praise and conduct of the action to the Duke's favourite, Mr. Cadogan.

There was no little talk and excitement occasioned by this strange behaviour of General Webb, who had almost drawn a sword upon the Commander-in-Chief; but the General, after the first outbreak of his anger, mastered it outwardly altogether; and, by his subsequent behaviour, had the satisfaction of even more angering the Commander-in-Chief, than he could have done by any public exhibition of repentment.

On returning to his quarters, and consulting with his chief adviser, Mr. Esmond, who was now entirely in the General's confidence, and treated by him as a friend, and almost a son, Mr. Webb wrote a letter to his Grace the Commander-in-Chief, in which he said:—

“Your Grace must be aware that the sudden perusal of the ‘London Gazette,’ in which your Grace’s secretary, Mr. Cardonnel, hath mentioned Major-General Cadogan’s name, as the officer commanding in the late action of Wynendael, must have caused a feeling of anything but pleasure to the General who fought that action.

“Your Grace must be aware that Mr. Cadogan was not even present at the battle, though he arrived with squadrons of Horse at its close, and put himself under the command of his superior officer. And as the result of the battle of Wynendael, in which Lieutenant-General Webb had the good fortune to command, was the capture of Lille, the relief of Brussels, then invested by the enemy under the Elector of Bavaria, the restoration of the great cities of Ghent and Bruges, of which the enemy (by treason within the walls) had got possession in the previous year: Mr. Webb cannot consent to forego the honours of such a success and service, for the benefit of Mr. Cadogan, or any other person.

“As soon as the military operations of the year are over, Lieutenant-General Webb will

request permission to leave the army, and return to his place in Parliament, where he gives notice to his Grace the Commander-in-Chief that he shall lay his case before the House of Commons, the country, and her Majesty the Queen.

“By his eagerness to rectify that false statement of the Gazette, which had been written by his Grace’s secretary, Mr. Cardonnel, Mr. Webb, not being able to reach his Grace the Commander-in-Chief on account of the gentlemen feated between them, placed the paper containing the false statement on his sword, so that it might more readily arrive in the hands of his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, who surely would wish to do justice to every officer of his army.

“Mr. Webb knows his duty too well to think of insubordination to his superior officer, or of using his sword in a campaign against any but the enemies of her Majesty. He solicits permission to return to England immediately the military duties will permit, and take with him to England Captain Esmond, of his regiment, who acted as his aide-de-camp, and was present during the entire action, and noted by his watch the time when Mr. Cadogan arrived at its close.”

The Commander-in-Chief could not but grant this permission, nor could he take notice of Webb's letter, though it was couched in terms the most insulting. Half the army believed that the cities of Ghent and Bruges were given up by a treason, which some in our army very well understood ; that the Commander-in-Chief would not have relieved Lille if he could have helped himself ; that he would not have fought that year had not the Prince of Savoy forced him. When the battle once began, then, for his own renown, my Lord Marlborough would fight as no man in the world ever fought better ; and no bribe on earth could keep him from beating the enemy.*

* Our Grandfather's hatred of the Duke of Marlborough appears all through his account of these campaigns. He always persisted that the Duke was the greatest traitor and soldier History ever told of : and declared that he took bribes on all hands during the war. My Lord Marquis (for so we may call him here, though he never went by any other name than Colonel Esmond) was in the habit of telling many stories which he did not set down in his memoirs, and which he had from his friend the Jesuit, who was not always correctly informed, and who persisted that Marlborough was looking for a bribe of two millions of crowns before the campaign of Ramillies.

And our Grandmother used to tell us children that on his first presentation to my Lord Duke, the Duke turned his back upon my Grandfather ; and said to the Duchess, who told my

But the matter was taken up by the subordinates; and half the army might have been by the ears, if the quarrel had not been stopped. General Cadogan sent an intimation to General Webb to say that he was ready if Webb liked, and would meet him. This was a kind of invitation our stout old general was always too ready to accept, and 'twas with great difficulty we got the General to reply that he had no quarrel with Mr. Cadogan, who had behaved with perfect gallantry, but only with those at head-quarters, who had belied him. Mr. Cardonnel offered General Webb reparation, Mr. Webb said he had a cane at the service of Mr. Cardonnel, and the only satisfaction he wanted from him was one he was not likely to get, namely, the truth. The officers in our staff of Webb's, and those in the immediate suite of the General, were ready to come to blows: and hence arose the only affair in which Mr. Esmond ever engaged as

lady dowager at Chelsea, who afterwards told Colonel Esmond,—"Tom Esmond's bastard has been to my levee: he has the hang-dog look of his rogue of a father"—an expression which my Grandfather never forgave. He was as constant in his dislikes as in his attachments: and exceedingly partial to Webb, whose side he took against the more celebrated general. We have General Webb's portrait now at Castlewood. Va.

principal, and that was from a revengeful wish to wipe off an old injury.

My Lord Mohun, who had a troop in Lord Macclesfield's regiment of the Horse Guards, rode this campaign with the Duke. He had sunk by this time to the very worst reputation ; he had had another fatal duel in Spain ; he had married, and forsaken his wife ; he was a gambler, a profligate, and debauchee. He joined just before Oudenarde ; and, as Esmond feared, as soon as Frank Castlewood heard of his arrival, Frank was for seeking him out, and killing him. The wound my lord got at Oudenarde prevented their meeting, but that was nearly healed, and Mr. Esmond trembled daily lest any chance should bring his boy and this known assassin together. They met at the mess-table of Handy-side's regiment at Lille ; the officer commanding not knowing of the feud between the two noblemen.

Esmond had not seen the hateful handsome face of Mohun for nine years, since they had met on that fatal night in Leicester Field. It was degraded with crime and passion now ; it wore the anxious look of a man who has three deaths

—and who knows how many hidden shames, and lusts, and crimes on his conscience. He bowed with a sickly low bow, and flunk away when our host presented us round to one another. Frank Castlewood had not known him till then, so changed was he. He knew the boy well enough.

'Twas curious to look at the two—especially the young man, whose face flushed up when he heard the hated name of the other; and who said in his bad French and his brave boyish voice—“he had long been anxious to meet my Lord Mohun.” The other only bowed and moved away from him. I do him justice, he wished to have no quarrel with the lad.

Esmond put himself between them at table. “D— it,” says Frank, “why do you put yourself in the place of a man who is above you in degree? My Lord Mohun should walk after me. I want to sit by my Lord Mohun.”

Esmond whispered to Lord Mohun, that Frank was hurt in the leg at Oudenarde; and besought the other to be quiet. Quiet enough he was for some time; disregarding the many taunts which young Castlewood flung at him,

until after several healths, when my Lord Mohun got to be rather in liquor.

“Will you go away, my lord?” Mr. Esmond said to him, imploring him to quit the table.

“No, by G—,” says my Lord Mohun. “I’ll not go away for any man;” he was quite flushed with wine by this time.

The talk got round to the affairs of yesterday. Webb had offered to challenge the Commander-in-Chief: Webb had been ill-used: Webb was the bravest, handsomest, vainest man in the army. Lord Mohun did not know that Esmond was Webb’s aide-de-camp. He began to tell some stories against the General: which, from t’other side of Esmond, young Castlewood contradicted.

“I can’t bear any more of this,” says my Lord Mohun.

“Nor can I, my lord,” says Mr. Esmond, starting up. “The story my Lord Mohun has told respecting General Webb is false, gentlemen—false, I repeat,” and making a low bow to Lord Mohun, and without a single word more, Esmond got up and left the dining-room. These affairs were common enough among the military of those days. There was a garden behind the

house, and all the party turned instantly into it : and the two gentlemen's coats were off and their points engaged within two minutes after Esmond's words had been spoken. If Captain Esmond had put Mohun out of the world, as he might, a villain would have been punished and spared further villanies—but who is one man to punish another ? I declare upon my honour that my only thought was to prevent Lord Mohun from mischief with Frank, and the end of this meeting was, that after half-a-dozen passes my lord went home with a hurt which prevented him from lifting his right arm for three months.

“O Harry ! why didn't you kill the villain ?” young Castlewood asked. “I can't walk without a crutch : but I could have met him on horseback with sword and pistol.” But Harry Esmond said, “'Twas best to have no man's life on one's conscience, not even that villain's ;” and this affair, which did not occupy three minutes, being over, the gentlemen went back to their wine, and my Lord Mohun to his quarters, where he was laid up with a fever which had spared mischief had it proved fatal. And very soon after this affair Harry Esmond and his general

left the camp for London; whither a certain reputation had preceded the Captain, for my Lady Castlewood of Chelsea received him as if he had been a conquering hero. She gave a great dinner to Mr. Webb, where the General's chair was crowned with laurels? and her ladyship called Esmond's health in a toast, to which my kind general was graciously pleased to bear the strongest testimony: and took down a mob of at least forty coaches to cheer our general as he came out of the House of Commons, the day when he received the thanks of Parliament for his action. The mob huzza'd and applauded him, as well as the fine company: it was splendid to see him waving his hat, and bowing, and laying his hand upon his Order of Generosity. He introduced Mr. Esmond to Mr. St. John and the Right Honourable Robert Harley, Esquire, as he came out of the house walking between them; and was pleased to make many flattering observations regarding Mr. Esmond's behaviour during the three last campaigns.

Mr. St. John (who had the most winning presence of any man I ever saw, excepting always my peerless young Frank Castlewood,) said he

had heard of Mr. Esmond before from Captain Steele, and how he had helped Mr. Addison to write his famous poem of the "Campaign."

"'Tis as great an achievement as the victory of Blenheim itself," Mr. Harley said, who was famous as a judge and patron of letters, and so perhaps it may be—though for my part I think there are twenty beautiful lines, but all the rest is common-place, and Mr. Addison's hymn worth a thousand such poems.

All the town was indignant at my Lord Duke's unjust treatment of General Webb, and applauded the vote of thanks which the House of Commons gave to the General for his victory at Wynendael. 'Tis certain that the capture of Lille was the consequence of that lucky achievement, and the humiliation of the old French king, who was said to suffer more at the loss of this great city, than from any of the former victories our troops had won over him. And, I think, no small part of Mr. Webb's exultation at his victory arose from the idea that Marlborough had been disappointed of a great bribe the French king had promised him, should the siege be raised. The very sum of money offered

to him was mentioned by the Duke's enemies; and honest Mr. Webb chuckled at the notion not only of beating the French, but of beating Marlborough too, and intercepting a convoy of three millions of French crowns, that were on their way to the Generalissimo's insatiable pockets. When the General's lady went to the Queen's drawing-room, all the Tory women crowded round her with congratulations, and made her a train greater than the Duchefs of Marlborough's own. Feasts were given to the General by all the chiefs of the Tory party, who vaunted him as the Duke's equal in military skill; and perhaps used the worthy soldier as their instrument, whilst he thought they were but acknowledging his merits as a commander. As the General's aide-de-camp, and favourite officer, Mr. Esmond came in for a share of his chief's popularity, and was presented to her Majesty, and advanced to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, at the request of his grateful chief.

We may be sure there was one family in which any good fortune that happened to Esmond, caused such a sincere pride and pleasure, that he, for his part, was thankful he could make them

so happy. With these fond friends, Blenheim and Oudenarde seemed to be mere trifling incidents of the war; and Wynendael was its crowning victory. Esmond's mistress never tired to hear accounts of the battle; and I think General Webb's lady grew jealous of her, for the General was for ever at Kensington, and talking on that delightful theme. As for his aide-de-camp, though, no doubt, Esmond's own natural vanity was pleased at the little share of reputation which his good fortune had won him, yet it was chiefly precious to him (he may say so, now that he hath long since outlived it) because it pleased his mistress, and, above all, because Beatrix valued it.

As for the old dowager of Chelsea, never was an old woman in all England more delighted nor more gracious than she. Esmond had his quarters in her ladyship's house, where the domesticks were instructed to consider him as their master. She bade him give entertainments, of which she defrayed the charges, and was charmed when his guests were carried away tipsy in their coaches. She must have his picture taken; and accordingly he was painted by

Mr. Jervas, in his red coat, and smiling upon a bomb-shell, which was bursting at a corner of the piece. She vowed that unless he made a great match, she should never die easy, and was for ever bringing young ladies to Chelsea, with pretty faces and pretty fortunes, at the disposal of the Colonel. He smiled to think how times were altered with him, and of the early days in his father's lifetime, when a trembling page he stood before her, with her ladyship's basin and ewer, or crouched in her coach-step. The only fault she found with him was, that he was more sober than an Esmond ought to be ; and would neither be carried to bed by his valet, nor lose his heart to any beauty, whether of St. James's or Covent Garden.

What is the meaning of fidelity in love, and whence the birth of it? 'Tis a state of mind that men fall into, and depending on the man rather than the woman. We love being in love, that's the truth on't. If we had not met Joan, we should have met Kate, and adored her. We know our mistresses are no better than many other women, nor no prettier, nor no wiser, nor no wittier. 'Tis not for these reasons we love

a woman, or for any special quality or charm I know of; we might as well demand that a lady should be the tallest woman in the world, like the Shropshire giants,* as that she should be a paragon in any other character, before we began to love her. Esmond's mistress had a thousand faults beside her charms: he knew both perfectly well! she was imperious, she was light-minded, she was flighty, she was false, she had no reverence in her character; she was in everything, even in beauty, the contrast of her mother, who was the most devoted and the least selfish of women. Well, from the very first moment he saw her on the stairs at Walcote, Esmond knew he loved Beatrix. There might be better women—he wanted that one. He cared for none other. Was it because she was gloriously beautiful? Beautiful as she was, he hath heard people say a score of times in their company, that Beatrix's mother looked as young, and was the handsomer of the two. Why did her voice thrill in his ear so? She could not sing near so well as Nicolini or Mrs. Tofts; nay,

* 'Tis not thus *woman loves*: Col. E. hath owned to this folly for a *score of women* besides.—R.

she sang out of tune, and yet he liked to hear her better than St. Cecilia. She had not a finer complexion than Mrs. Steele (Dick's wife, whom he had now got, and who ruled poor Dick with a rod of pickle), and yet to see her dazzled Esmond; he would shut his eyes, and the thought of her dazzled him all the same. She was brilliant and lively in talk, but not so incomparably witty as her mother, who, when she was cheerful, said the finest things; but yet to hear her, and to be with her, was Esmond's greatest pleasure. Days passed away between him and these ladies, he scarce knew how. He poured his heart out to them, so as he never could in any other company, where he hath generally passed for being moody, or supercilious and silent. This society* was more delightful than that of the greatest wits to him. May Heaven pardon him the lies he told the dowager at Chelsea, in order to get a pretext for going away to Kensington; the business at the Ordnance which he invented; the interview with his General, the courts and statesman's levees which

* And, indeed, so was his to them, a thousand thousand times more charming, for where was his equal?—R.

he *didn't* frequent and describe : who wore a new suit on Sunday at Saint James's or at the Queen's birth-day ; how many coaches filled the street at Mr. Harley's levee ; how many bottles he had had the honour to drink over night with Mr. St. John at the Cocoa Tree, or at the Garter with Mr. Walpole and Mr. Steele.

Mistress Beatrix Esmond had been a dozen times on the point of making great matches, so the Court scandal said ; but for his part Esmond never would believe the stories against her ; and came back, after three years' absence from her, not so frantick as he had been perhaps, but still hungering after her and no other ; still hopeful, still kneeling, with his heart in his hand for the young lady to take. We were now got to 1709. She was near twenty-two years old, and three years at Court, and without a husband.

" 'Tis not for want of being asked," Lady Castlewood said, looking into Esmond's heart, as she could, with that perceptiveness affection gives. " But she will make no mean match, Harry : she will not marry as I would have her ; the person whom I should like to call my

son, and Henry Esmond knows who that is, is best served by my not pressing his claim. Beatrix is so wilful, that what I would urge on her, she would be sure to resist. The man who would marry her will not be happy with her, unless he be a great person, and can put her in a great position. Beatrix loves admiration more than love; and longs, beyond all things, for command. Why should a mother speak so of her child? You are my son, too, Harry. You should know the truth about your sister. I thought you might cure yourself of your passion," my lady added, fondly. "Other people can cure themselves of that folly, you know. But I see you are still as infatuated as ever. When we read your name in the Gazette, I pleaded for you, my poor boy. Poor boy, indeed! You are growing a grave old gentleman now, and I am an old woman. She likes your fame well enough, and she likes your person. She says you have wit, and fire, and good breeding, and are more natural than the fine gentlemen of the Court. But this is not enough. She wants a commander-in-chief, and not a colonel. Were a duke to ask her, she would leave an earl whom

she had promised. I told you so before. I know not how my poor girl is so worldly."

"Well," says Esmond, "a man can but give his best and his all. She has that from me. What little reputation I have won, I swear I cared for it but because I thought Beatrix would be pleased with it. What care I to be a colonel or a general? Think you 'twill matter a few score years hence, what our foolish honours to-day are? I would have had a little fame, that she might wear it in her hat. If I had anything better, I would endow her with it. If she wants my life, I would give it her. If she marries another, I will say God bless him. I make no boast, nor no complaint. I think my fidelity is folly, perhaps. But so it is. I cannot help myself. I love her. You are a thousand times better: the fondest, the fairest, the dearest, of women. Sure, my dear lady, I see all Beatrix's faults as well as you do. But she is my fate. 'Tis endurable. I shall not die for not having her. I think I should be no happier, if I won her. *Que voulez vous ?* as my Lady of Chelsea would say. *Je l'aime.*"

"I wish she would have you," said Harry's

fond mistress, giving a hand to him. He kissed the fair hand ('twas the prettiest dimpled little hand in the world, and my Lady Castlewood, though now almost forty years old, did not look to be within ten years of her age). He kissed and kept her fair hand, as they talked together.

"Why," says he, "should she hear me? She knows what I would say. Far or near she knows I'm her slave. I have sold myself for nothing, it may be. Well, 'tis the price I choose to take. I am worth nothing, or I am worth all."

"You are such a treasure," Esmond's mistress was pleased to say, "that the woman who has your love, shouldn't change it away against a kingdom, I think. I am a country-bred woman, and cannot say but the ambitions of the town seem mean to me. I never was awe-stricken by my Lady Duchess's rank and finery, or afraid," she added, with a sly laugh, "of anything but her temper. I hear of Court ladies who pine because her Majesty looks cold on them; and great noblemen who would give a limb that they might wear a garter on the other. This worldliness, which I can't comprehend, was born with

Beatrix, who, on the first day of her waiting, was a perfect courtier. We are like sisters, and she the elder sister, somehow. She tells me I have a mean spirit. I laugh, and say she adores a coach-and-six. I cannot reason her out of her ambition. 'Tis natural to her, as to me to love quiet, and be indifferent about rank and riches. What are they, Harry? and for how long do they last? Our home is not here." She smiled as she spoke, and looked like an angel that was only on earth on a visit. "Our home is where the just are, and where our sins and sorrows enter not. My father used to rebuke me, and say that I was too hopeful about Heaven. But I cannot help my nature, and grow obstinate as I grow to be an old woman; and as I love my children so, sure Our Father loves us with a thousand and a thousand times greater love. It must be that we shall meet yonder, and be happy. Yes, you—and my children, and my dear lord. Do you know, Harry, since his death, it has always seemed to me as if his love came back to me, and that we are parted no more. Perhaps he is here, now, Harry—I think he is. Forgiven I am sure he is: even

Mr. Atterbury absolved him, and he died forgiving. O, what a noble heart he had! How generous he was! I was but fifteen, and a child when he married me. How good he was to stoop to me! He was always good to the poor and humble." She stopped, then presently, with a peculiar expression, as if her eyes were looking into Heaven, and saw my lord there, she smiled, and gave a little laugh. "I laugh to see you, sir," she says; "when you come, it seems as if you never were away." One may put her words down, and remember them, but how describe her sweet tones, sweeter than musick.

My young lord did not come home at the end of the campaign, and wrote that he was kept at Bruxelles on military duty. Indeed, I believe he was engaged in laying siege to a certain lady, who was of the suite of Madame de Soissons, the Prince of Savoy's mother, who was just dead, and who, like the Flemish fortresses, was taken and retaken a great number of times during the war, and occupied by French, English, and Imperialists. Of course, Mr. Esmond did not think fit to enlighten Lady

Castlewood regarding the young scapegrace's doings: nor had he said a word about the affair with Lord Mohun, knowing how abhorrent that man's name was to his mistress. Frank did not waste much time or money on pen and ink; and, when Harry came home with his general, only wrote two lines to his mother, to say his wound in the leg was almost healed, that he would keep his coming of age next year,—that the duty aforesaid would keep him at Bruxelles, and that Cousin Harry would tell all the news.

But from Bruxelles, knowing how the Lady Castlewood always liked to have a letter about the famous 29th of December, my lord wrote her a long and full one, and in this he must have described the affair with Mohun; for when Mr. Esmond came to visit his mistress one day, early in the new year, to his great wonderment, she and her daughter both came up and saluted him, and after them the dowager of Chelsea, too, whose chairman had just brought her ladyship from her village to Kensington across the fields. After this honour, I say, from the two ladies of Castlewood, the dowager came forward in great

state, with her grand tall headdress of King James's reign, that she never forsook, and said, "Cousin Henry, all our family have met; and we thank you, cousin, for your noble conduct towards the head of our house." And pointing to her blushing cheek, she made Mr. Esmond aware that he was to enjoy the rapture of an embrace there. Having saluted one cheek, she turned to him the other. "Cousin Harry," said both the other ladies, in a little chorus, "We thank you for your noble conduct;" and then Harry became aware that the story of the Lille affair had come to his kinswomen's ears. It pleased him to hear them all saluting him as one of their family.

The tables of the dining-room were laid for a great entertainment; and the ladies were in gala dresses—my Lady of Chelsea in her highest *tour*, my Lady Viscountess out of black, and looking fair and happy, *à ravir*; and the Maid of Honour attired with that splendour which naturally distinguished her, and wearing on her beautiful breast the French officer's star, which Frank had sent home after Ramillies.

"You see, 'tis a gala day with us" says she,

glancing down to the star complacently, "and we have our orders on. Does not mamma look charming? 'Twas I dressed her!" Indeed, Esmond's dear mistress, blushing as he looked at her, with her beautiful fair hair and an elegant dress, according to the *mode*, appeared to have the shape and complexion of a girl of twenty.

On the table was a fine sword, with a red velvet scabbard, and a beautiful chased silver handle, with a blue ribbon for a sword-knot. "What is this?" says the Captain, going up to look at this pretty piece.

Mrs. Beatrix advanced towards it. "Kneel down," says she: "we dub you our knight with this"—and she waved the sword over his head—"my Lady Dowager hath given the sword; and I give the riband, and mamma hath sewn on the fringe."

"Put the sword on him, Beatrix," says her mother. "You are our knight, Harry—our true knight. Take a mother's thanks and prayers for defending her son, my dear, dear friend." She could say no more, and even the dowager was affected, for a couple of rebellious tears made sad marks down those wrinkled old

roses which Esmond had just been allowed to salute.

“We had a letter from dearest Frank,” his mother said, “three days since, whilst you were on your visit to your friend Captain Steele, at Hampton. He told us all that you had done, and how nobly you had put yourself between him and that—that wretch.”

“And I adopt you from this day,” says the dowager; “and I wish I was richer, for your sake, son Esmond,” she added, with a wave of her hand; and as Mr. Esmond dutifully went down on his knee before her ladyship, she cast her eyes up to the ceiling (the gilt chandelier, and the twelve wax candles in it, for the party was numerous), and invoked a blessing from that quarter upon the newly adopted son.

“Dear Frank,” says the other viscountess, “how fond he is of his military profession! He is studying fortification very hard. I wish he were here. We shall keep his coming of age at Castlewood next year.”

“If the campaign permit us,” says Mr. Esmond.

“I am never afraid, when he is with you,”

cries the boy's mother. "I am fure my Henry will always defend him."

"But there will be a peace before next year ; we know it for certain," cries the Maid of Honour. "Lord Marlborough will be difmiffed, and that horrible duchefs turned out of all her places. Her Majesty won't fpeak to her now. Did you fee her at Bufhy, Harry? fhe is furious, and fhe ranges about the park like a lionefs, and tears people's eyes out."

"And the Princess Anne will fend for somebody," fays my Lady of Chelfea, taking out her medal, and kiffing it.

"Did you fee the King at Oudenarde, Harry?" his miftrefs asked. She was a ftaunch Jacobite, and would no more have thought of denying her king than her God.

"I faw the young Hanoverian only : " Harry faid, "The Chevalier de St. George."

"The King, fir, the King!" faid the ladies and Mifs Beatrix; and fhe clapped her pretty hands, and cried "Vive le Roy."

By this time there came a thundering knock, that drove in the doors of the houfe almoft. It was three o'clock, and the company were

arriving ; and presently the servant announced Captain Steele and his lady.

Captain and Mrs. Steele, who were the first to arrive, had driven to Kenfington from their country-house, the Hovel at Hampton Wick, "Not from our mansion in Bloomsbury Square," as Mrs. Steele took care to inform the ladies. Indeed, Harry had ridden away from Hampton that very morning, leaving the couple by the ears ; for, from the chamber where he lay, in a bed that was none of the cleanest, and kept awake by the company which he had in his own bed, and the quarrel which was going on in the next room, he could hear both night and morning the curtain lecture which Mrs. Steele was in the habit of administering to poor Dick.

At night, it did not matter so much for the culprit ; Dick was fuddled, and when in that way no scolding could interrupt his benevolence. Mr. Esmond could hear him coaxing and speaking in that maudlin manner, which punch and claret produce, to his beloved Prue, and beseeching her to remember that there was a *distiwiisht officer ithe rex roob*, who would overhear her. She went on, nevertheless, calling him a drunken

wretch, and was only interrupted in her harangues by the Captain's snoring.

In the morning, the unhappy victim awoke to a headache and consciousness, and the dialogue of the night was resumed. "Why do you bring captains home to dinner when there's not a guinea in the house? How am I to give dinners when you leave me without a shilling? How am I to go trapezing to Kensington in my yellow satin sack before all the fine company? I've nothing fit to put on; I never have:" and so the dispute went on—Mr. Esmond interrupting the talk when it seemed to be growing too intimate by blowing his nose as loudly as ever he could, at the sound of which trumpet there came a lull. But Dick was charming, though his wife was odious, and 'twas to give Mr. Steele pleasure, that the ladies of Castlewood, who were ladies of no small fashion, invited Mrs. Steele.

Besides the Captain and his lady, there was a great and notable assemblage of company: my Lady of Chelsea having sent her lackeys and liveries to aid the modest attendance at Kensington. There was Lieutenant-General Webb, Harry's kind patron, of whom the dowager took

possession, and who resplended in velvet and gold lace; there was Harry's new acquaintance, the Right Honourable Henry St. John, Esquire, the General's kinsman, who was charmed with the Lady Castlewood, even more than with her daughter; there was one of the greatest noblemen in the kingdom, the Scots Duke of Hamilton, just created Duke of Brandon in England; and two other noble lords of the Tory party, my Lord Ashburnham, and another I have forgot; and for ladies, her Grace the Duchess of Ormonde and her daughters, the Lady Mary and the Lady Betty, the former one of Mistress Beatrix's colleagues in waiting on the Queen.

"What a party of Tories!" whispered Captain Steele to Esmond, as we were assembled in the parlour before dinner. Indeed, all the company present, save Steele, were of that faction.

Mr. St. John made his special compliments to Mrs. Steele, and so charmed her, that she declared she would have Steele a Tory too.

"Or will you have me a Whig?" says Mr. St. John. "I think, madam, you could convert a man to anything."

"If Mr. St. John ever comes to Bloomsbury

Square I will teach him what I know," says Mrs. Steele, dropping her handsome eyes. "Do you know Bloomsbury Square?"

"Do I know the Mall? Do I know the Opera? Do I know the reigning toast? Why, Bloomsbury is the very height of the mode," says Mr. St. John. "'Tis *rus in urbe*. You have gardens all the way to Hampstead, and palaces round about you — Southampton House and Montague House."

"Where you wretches go and fight duels," cries Mrs. Steele.

"Of which the ladies are the cause!" says her entertainer. "Madam, is Dick a good swordsman? How charming the Tatler is! We all recognised your portrait in the 49th number, and I have been dying to know you ever since I read it. 'Aspasia must be allowed to be the first of the beauteous order of love.' Doth not the passage run so? 'In this accomplished lady love is the constant effect, though it is never the design; yet though her mien carries much more invitation than command, to behold her is an immediate check to loose behaviour, and to love her is a liberal education.'"

“ Oh indeed ! ” says Mrs. Steele, who did not seem to understand a word of what the gentleman was saying.

“ Who could fail to be accomplished under such a mistress ? ” says Mr. St. John, still gallant and bowing.

“ Mistress ! upon my word, sir ! ” cries the lady. “ If you mean me, sir, I would have you know that I am the Captain’s wife.”

“ Sure we all know it,” answers Mr. St. John, keeping his countenance very gravely ; and Steele broke in, saying, “ ’Twas not about Mrs. Steele I writ that paper—though I am sure she is worthy of any compliment I can pay her—but of the Lady Elizabeth Hastings.”

“ I always thought that paper was Mr. Congreve’s,” cries Mr. St. John, showing that he knew more about the subject than he pretended to Mr. Steele, and who was the original Mr. Bickerstaffe drew.

“ Tom Boxer said so in his *Observer*. But Tom’s oracle is often making blunders,” cries Steele.

“ Mr. Boxer and my husband were friends once, and when the Captain was ill with the fever

no man could be kinder than Mr. Boxer, who used to come to his bedside every day, and actually brought Dr. Arbuthnot who cured him," whispered Mrs. Steele.

"Indeed, madam! How very interesting!" says Mr. St. John.

"But when the Captain's last comedy came out, Mr. Boxer took no notice of it,—you know he is Mr. Congreve's man, and won't ever give a word to the other house,—and this made my husband angry."

"Oh! Mr. Boxer is Mr. Congreve's man!" says Mr. St. John.

"Mr. Congreve has wit enough of his own," cries out Mr. Steele. "No one ever heard me grudge him or any other man his share."

"I hear Mr. Addison is equally famous as a wit and a poet," says Mr. St. John. "Is it true that his hand is to be found in your Tatler, Mr. Steele?"

"Whether 'tis the sublime or the humourous, no man can come near him," cries Steele.

"A fig, Dick, for your Mr. Addison!" cries out his lady: "a gentleman who gives himself such airs and holds his head so high now. I hope

your ladyship thinks as I do : I can't bear those very fair men with white eyelashes—a black man for me. (All the black men at table applauded, and made Mrs. Steele a bow for this compliment.) As for this Mr. Addison," she went on, "he comes to dine with the Captain sometimes, never says a word to me, and then they walk upstairs, both tipsy, to a dish of tea. I remember your Mr. Addison when he had but one coat to his back, and that with a patch at the elbow."

"Indeed—a patch at the elbow ! You interest me," says Mr. St. John. "'Tis charming to hear of one man of letters from the charming wife of another."

"Law, I could tell you ever so much about 'em," continues the voluble lady. "What do you think the Captain has got now?—a little hunchback fellow—a little hop-o'-my-thumb creature that he calls a poet—a little popish brat !"

"Hush, there are two in the room," whispers her companion.

"Well, I call him popish because his name is Pope," says the lady. "'Tis only my joking

way. And this little dwarf of a fellow has wrote a pastoral poem—all about shepherds and shepherdesses, you know.

“A shepherd should have a little crook,” says my mistress, laughing from her end of the table : on which Mrs. Steele said, “she did not know, but the Captain brought home this queer little creature when she was in bed with her first boy, and it was a mercy he had come no sooner ; and David raved about his *genus*, and was always raving about some nonsense or other.”

“Which of the Tatlers do you prefer, Mrs. Steele?” asked Mr. St. John.

“I never read but one, and think it all a pack of rubbish, sir,” says the lady. “Such stuff about Bickerstaffe, and Distaff, and Quarterstaff, as it all is ! There’s the Captain going on still with the Burgundy—I know he’ll be tipsy before he stops—Captain Steele !”

“I drink to your eyes, my dear,” says the Captain, who seemed to think his wife charming, and to receive as genuine all the satirick compliments which Mr. St. John paid her.

All this while the Maid of Honour had been

trying to get Mr. Esmond to talk, and no doubt voted him a dull fellow. For, by some mistake, just as he was going to pop into the vacant place, he was placed far away from Beatrix's chair, who fate between his Grace and my Lord Ashburnham, and shrugged her lovely white shoulders, and cast a look as if to say, "Pity me," to her cousin. My Lord Duke and his young neighbour were presently in a very animated and close conversation. Mrs. Beatrix could no more help using her eyes than the sun can help shining, and setting those it shines on a-burning. By the time the first course was done the dinner seemed long to Esmond: by the time the soup came he fancied they must have been hours at table: and as for the sweets and jellies he thought they never would be done.

At length the ladies rose, Beatrix throwing a Parthian glance at her duke as she retreated; a fresh bottle and glasses were fetched, and toasts were called. Mr. St. John asked his Grace the Duke of Hamilton and the company to drink to the health of his Grace the Duke of Brandon. Another lord gave General Webb's health, "and may he get the command the bravest officer in

the world deserves." Mr. Webb thanked the company, complimented his aide-de-camp, and fought his famous battle over again.

"*Il est fatigant*," whispers Mr. St. John, "*avec sa trompette de Wynendael*."

Captain Steele, who was not of our side, loyally gave the health of the Duke of Marlborough, the greatest general of the age.

"I drink to the greatest general with all my heart," says Mr. Webb; "there can be no gain-saying that character of him. My glass goes to the General, and not to the Duke, Mr. Steele." And the stout old gentleman emptied his bumper; to which Dick replied by filling and emptying a pair of brimmers, one for the General and one for the Duke.

And now his Grace of Hamilton, rising up, with flashing eyes (we had all been drinking pretty freely), proposed a toast to the lovely, to the incomparable Mrs. Beatrix Esmond; we all drank it with cheers, and my Lord Ashburnham especially, with a shout of enthusiasm.

"What a pity there is a Duchess of Hamilton," whispers St. John, who drank more wine

and yet was more steady than most of the others, and we entered the drawing-room, where the ladies were at their tea. As for poor Dick, we were obliged to leave him alone at the dining-table, where he was hiccupping out the lines from the "Campaign," in which the greatest poet had celebrated the greatest general in the world; and Harry Esmond found him, half an hour afterwards, in a more advanced stage of liquor, and weeping about the treachery of Tom Boxer.

The drawing-room was all dark to poor Harry, in spite of the grand illumination. Beatrix scarce spoke to him. When my Lord Duke went away, she practised upon the next in rank, and plied my young Lord Ashburnham with all the fire of her eyes and the fascinations of her wit. Most of the party were set to cards, and Mr. St. John, after yawning in the face of Mrs. Steele, whom he did not care to pursue any more; and talking in his most brilliant, animated way to Lady Castlewood, whom he pronounced to be beautiful, of a far higher order of beauty than her daughter, presently took his leave, and went his way. The rest of the com-

pany speedily followed, my Lord Ashburnham the last, throwing fiery glances at the smiling young temptress, who had bewitched more hearts than his in her thrall.

No doubt, as a kinsman of the house, Mr. Esmond thought fit to be the last of all in it; he remained after the coaches had rolled away,—after his dowager aunt's chair and flambeaux had marched off in the darkness towards Chelsea, and the town's-people had gone to bed, who had been drawn into the square to gape at the unusual assemblage of chairs and chariots, lacqueys and torchmen. The poor mean wretch lingered yet for a few minutes, to see whether the girl would vouchsafe him a smile, or a parting word of consolation. But her enthusiasm of the morning was quite died out, or she chose to be in a different mood. She fell to joking about the dowdy appearance of Lady Betty, and mimicked the vulgarity of Mrs. Steele; and then she put up her little hand to her mouth and yawned, lighted a taper, and shrugged her shoulders, and dropping Mr. Esmond a faucy curtsy, failed off to bed.

“The day began so well, Henry, that I had

hoped it might have ended better," was all the consolation that poor Esmond's fond mistress could give him ; and as he trudged home through the dark alone, he thought, with bitter rage in his heart, and a feeling of almost revolt against the sacrifice he had made :—" She would have me," thought he, " had I but a name to give her. But for my promise to her father, I might have my rank and my mistress too."

I suppose a man's vanity is stronger than any other passion in him ; for I blush, even now, as I recall the humiliation of those distant days, the memory of which still smarts, though the fever of balked desire has passed away more than a score of years ago. When the writer's descendants come to read this memoir, I wonder will they have lived to experience a similar defeat and shame ? Will they ever have knelt to a woman, who has listened to them, and played with them, and laughed at them,—who beckoning them with lures and caresses, and with Yes, smiling from her eyes, has tricked them on to their knees, and turned her back and left them. All this shame, Mr. Esmond had to

undergo; and he submitted, and revolted, and presently came crouching back for more.

After this feste, my young Lord Ashburnham's coach was for ever rolling in and out of Kenfington Square; his lady-mother came to visit Esmond's mistress, and at every assembly in the town, wherever the Maid of Honour made her appearance, you might be pretty sure to see the young gentleman in a new suit every week, and decked out in all the finery that his tailor or embroiderer could furnish for him. My lord was for ever paying Mr. Esmond compliments: bidding him to dinner, offering him horses to ride, and giving him a thousand uncouth marks of respect and good-will. At last, one night at the coffee-house, whither my lord came considerably flushed and excited with drink, he rushes up to Mr. Esmond, and cries out—"Give me joy, my dearest Colonel; I am the happiest of men."

"The happiest of men needs no dearest colonel to give him joy," says Mr. Esmond. "What is the cause of this supreme felicity?"

"Haven't you heard?" says he. "Don't you know? I thought the family told you

everything: the adorable Beatrix hath promised to be mine."

"What!" cries out Mr. Esmond, who had spent happy hours with Beatrix that very morning,—had writ verses for her, that she had sung at the harpsichord.

"Yes," says he; "I waited on her to-day. I saw you walking towards Knightsbridge, as I passed in my coach; and she looked so lovely, and spoke so kind that I couldn't help going down on my knees, and—and—sure I'm the happiest of men in all the world; and I'm very young; but she says I shall get older: and you know I shall be of age in four months; and there's very little difference between us; and I'm so happy. I should like to treat the company to something. Let us have a bottle—a dozen bottles—and drink the health of the finest woman in England."

Esmond left the young lord tossing off bumper after bumper, and strolled away to Kensington to ask whether the news was true. 'Twas only too sure: his mistress's sad, compassionate face told him the story; and then she related what particulars of it she knew, and how my young

lord had made his offer, half-an-hour after Esmund went away that morning, and in the very room where the song lay yet on the harp-fichord, which Esmund had writ, and they had sung together.

END OF VOL. II.

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